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THE BLACKFOOT QUEEN; OR, Old Nick Whiffles in the Valley of Death.

A Sequel to Phantom Princess, Concluded on Second Page.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,
Author of "The Phantom Princess; or, Ned Hazel, the Boy Trapper."

CHAPTER I.

FOUR YEARS AFTERWARD.

FOUR years have passed, and the short, beautiful summer of the North-west has again folded mountain, prairie and stream in its loving embrace. The sky is clear and bright with sunshine, the streams, except among the mountains, are free from ice, and the face of nature is very different from what would be expected so soon after such severe weather.

In front of a rough, grotesque cabin, which has already been described to my reader, sits Nick Whiffles, cleaning his rifle. Although four years have passed since we last saw him, there is scarcely any perceptible difference in his appearance. In the grizzled beard which covers the greater part of his face, there may be seen a few more straggling hairs, but that is all. The eye is just as bright, the step as firm and powerful, and the smile as genial as ever. He is dressed in the same hunter costume, and so far as he is concerned, it seems that a few days only have passed since his participation in the rescue of Hugh Bandman and the Phantom Princess.

A short distance away, the rotund, sleek-looking Shagbark is browsing the rich, succulent grass, and at the side of his master, with his nose between his legs, dozes his dog, Calamity.

Four years have made their mark in the career of Calamity, although he still bears up well under them. He is somewhat unwieldy in his movements, and has become quite fond of basking in the warm sunlight, and of sleeping by the blazing fire during the terrible cold of winter. Perhaps he is a little more surly to strangers, too, and is disposed to resent undue familiarity upon the part of any one. But he loves Nick as well, and his dangerously-sharp teeth are ready to be used in his service at any time.

The old hunter seems to be in a reverie this afternoon, and his motions in cleaning his weapon are almost mechanical, his thoughts being far away upon different matters altogether.

Suddenly he stops polishing the already-gleaming rifle-barrel that is stretched across his knees, and with one hand pressing down and grasping it, and shoving his coon-skin cap back from his forehead with the other, he exclaims:

"I swear to gracious! if it ain't four years ago this very summer sin' Ned left me, with

his father, and with Hugh and his wife. They left the little gal behind them, and that same gal has grown into one of the purtiest creetur's that a man ever set eyes on."

At this point one of his broad smiles illuminated his face, and he added in a confidential tone to himself:

"I wonder, now, ef I was a mind, ef I couldn't raise a condemned diffikilty there. No one dare say I ain't handsome, and then I've heerd tell of folks gettin' married as old as my father would be ef he were living to-day."

He smiled a few moments in the enjoyment of his own fancy, and then his face became sober again.

"No; the day has gone by fur Nick Whiffles to think of sich things. He is married to the woods, and peraries, and mountains, but Miona, ef Ned hasn't forgot his promise, it'll pay him to come out here to see her. It's about a month sin' I was through the village, and she looked purty 'nough to fly off like an angel. She hasn't forgot Ned, neither, and axed me about him; but I could n't tell her nothin'. All I know is that Ned and his old man went to England, as they call it, in the same vessel that carried Hugh and the Phantom. There's been a trapper down here every spring to ax about the gal, that I s'pose Hugh and his wife sent, and there's no danger of their forgetting her—Hello!"

At this juncture, Calamity threw up his head, pricked up his ears, and uttered a growl—an indication that some stranger was at hand. Almost instinctively Nick grasped his rifle, and looked inquiringly in the direction indicated by the dog.

"What is it, pup?" he demanded, in an undertone; "any call for powder and ball?"

The reply speedily came. The crackling of the undergrowth was heard, and the next moment a young man in the jaunty costume of an English sportsman stepped into the clearing. He wore the velvet cap, coat and vest, the high-topped boots, the leather covering the knees, the powder-flask at the side, and the richly-mounted rifle of the professional hunter of civilization, and there was an ease and self-possession in his manner acquired only by long and genuine practice in hunting game.

The countenance of the young man was frank and prepossessing, with his dark, hazel eyes, the ruddy, rose-tinted cheeks, and their soft "mutton-chop" whiskers. He was of a muscular mold, and would have

pulled a good stroke with the famed Oxford crew of his own country.

He paused a moment in front of the hunter, and then, with beaming face, walked rapidly toward him, holding out his hand.

"How do you do, my old friend? God bless you, Nick Whiffles, have you forgotten Ned Hazel?"

Nick mechanically took the proffered hand, slowly rose to his feet, and with open mouth stared at the young man in a dazed sort of way, as though he did not understand what it all meant.

"What's the matter, Nick? Have I changed so much that you don't know me? Why, I knew you the minute I placed eyes on you," continued the sportsman, laughing in a way that showed his handsome white teeth, while he shook the hand of the trapper with such violence that his whole body partook of the vibration.

"Thunderation!" finally gasped Nick; "can it be possible? Are you my own Ned? Why, you war a boy when you left me, and I've been thinking of you as the same boy ever since."

"I was over fifteen then; now I am nearly twenty. Is there any thing wonderful in that?"

"Wonderful?—I never see'd any thing like it! What do you weigh?"

"Only a hundred and seventy-five." "Thirty pound more than I do; let me take a nearer look at you," continued Nick, scrutinizing his face very closely. "There's them hazel eyes, sartin, just as bright and purty as they was, when they looked at me from the bottom of the canoe, sixteen or seventeen years ago. Lift your cap that I may see your forehead a little better."

The young man removed his cap entirely and stood in a smiling but meek attitude before the sorely puzzled trapper.

"Your hair is as soft and silky as it was then, your eyebrows are the same, and there's the scar where the grizzly bear nipped you with his nail, and your cheeks are as red as ever, but them condemned whiskers, they spile you."

"I fancied they were rather becoming," said the young man, with a rueful face, as he caressed them with his hand; "however, Nick, do you still doubt my identity?"

"No; I b'leve you're the giniwine an'mile, and we'll shake hands ag'in on it. God be thanked, Ned, I'm glad to see you. Set down, set down; Calamity don't know yer, although he's eying you purty sharp."

"How are you, pup?" said Ned, turning toward the dog, and patting his head. Perhaps, away down in the lowermost depths of the memory of the animal was a dim, flickering shadow of the handsome individual before him, and a faint gleam of intelligence lit up the eye of Calamity as he gazed at him. At any rate he knew he was the friend of his master. That was sufficient, and seating himself upon his haunches, he gazed contentedly upon the two men.

The two friends sat down on the log, side by side, and Ned said:

"Before going any further, Nick, let me ask you when you saw Miona last?"

"A short month ago, and she was as well and purty as ever; but, how is it you're here, Ned? You was to wait five years, and that won't be till another winter has come and gone."

"You're right, Nick; but, do you suppose I could content myself away from her any longer? I did my best: I have been to school, and studied hard; indeed I am by no means through with my schooling yet. I finally told the folks that I couldn't stand it any longer, and they gave their consent; so I took the first ship for Fort Churchill; Bandman and his wife came with me, so as to be here to meet us. I reached the fort about a month ago, and found a small party just getting ready to start to Oregon. As I was pretty well known at headquarters, I was given charge of the half-dozen men, and began working our way down to this point."

"We intend to visit the village, if it is safe, and barter with them; but, of course I couldn't pass anywhere near you without stopping to see you, and then, before I go near the place, I want to learn how the land lies, and to engage you to accompany us."

"Where are the men?"

"A number of miles up the river; I came on ahead, and made an appointment to meet them to-morrow morning near the bend; so I am going to spend the afternoon and night with you."

"I only wish it was going to be a year," remarked Nick, with a tremulous voice. "I've been counting the months I would have to wait for you, and I never dreamed you war goin' to cut 'em short, by a whole year."

"But you ain't sorry, I am sure," exclaimed Ned, in his hearty way, as he struck his hand upon the knee of the smiling trapper.

"I have been in correspondence with Miona ever since I left. It takes a long time for a letter to go from here to London and back again; and we didn't average many a year; but Mrs. Bandman had an arrangement, by which we knew when to send, and when to expect letters."

"I know they get letters at the fort from England, but how did they send 'em down here?"

"There was a hunter—Tim Nevins—who was employed to pass between the village and the fort, and he did his duty well. So, you see, I am here, and before we talk of old times, my best and truest of friends, tell me all you know about the darling of my heart. You have just told me she is well, and handsome, of course, but is she treated with consideration and respect among the Indians?"

"The same as she allers was."

"She doesn't expect me, because I wanted to surprise her; but when I was on my voyage across the Atlantic, a strange fear came over me. It occurred to me that such a beautiful and good woman as Miona must be admired among the Indians, and it is no more than likely that she has several dusky

lovers, who are looking hopefully forward to the time when she is to become a wife."

Nick Whiffles turned and looked sharply in the face of his young friend, and then answered, in a startling voice:

"You're right!"

"Explain!" commanded Ned, turning pale.

"I've a 'spicion of one man. Thar may be plenty of others—and I make no doubt thar is—that would give thar heads for her; but thar's only one that she need be aford of, and that's Red Bear, the son of the old chief Woo-wol-na."

"What about him?" demanded the lover, with a painful eagerness.

"Mind, the gal hasn't told me any thing, but I 'spicion, fact is, I'm sartin, that they've fixed that she shall be his squaw."

"In the face of the solemn agreement—"

"Mighty!" interrupted the trapper, "what's all the trainin' I give you amount to? Haven't you 'larnt a red-skin's natur' yet?"

"If they had given any reason to believe that they intended to keep their part of the agreement, none would be more conscientious in keeping mine; but, as they intend to perpetrate a great wrong, I shall now do my utmost to get her out of their hands, with as little delay as possible."

"You're right," said Nick, "and here's my hand upon it. We'll go down to the village together, and look round to see how things look, and arter that we'll fix the way we're goin' to act."

"There's no danger of my identity being suspected."

"Not much," laughed the trapper. "I don't b'leve the gal herself can be made to b'leve it's you till arter you've spent a week in swearin' to it, and then, arter all, she'll think it's your big brother."

"In that case, we will go together to the village. Oh! if I could but see her!" he exclaimed, springing up in his excitement.

"One look, one glance at her—I would walk a thousand miles to get it."

"P'raps you needn't go quite so fur as that, though they're apt to keep her powerful shady when white folks ar' about."

They sat in delightful converse, until the evening was drawing to a close, when Nick looked up.

"It's gettin' dark, and we'll go in, take supper, and start bright and airy in the mornin'."

"Have you any traps set?"

"Yes; but they don't need lookin' arter, and we'll tend to 'em in the mornin'."

The two walked into the hermit-like residence, where they ate their old-fashioned supper together, and then followed a long talk, in which each gave the other the particulars of his life for the previous four years. Finally they lay down and slept.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE WAS HE?

LONG before the sun was up, Nick Whiffles and Ned Mackintosh were astir. The old hunter had a number of traps, from which during the winter he managed to secure a most valuable lot of peltries. His experience and intimate knowledge of the country, taught him where to search for the haunts of the otter and beaver, and he always had a nice little income from his furs, caught during the winter.

It was with strange emotions that the young man made his round of the traps. Everything looked familiar—the appearance of the trees and vegetation, the smell of the woods, the clear, singing air—all revived powerfully the memories, that had almost faded during the rush of events, during the four years that had been spent in another hemisphere and among scenes the very antipodes of these.

But here he had spent his childhood, and never could these scenes and incidents be forgotten.

In each of the half-dozen traps visited, was found a good plump beaver, every one of which was killed and dressed by Ned's own hand, and they reached the cabin again and made their breakfast upon the delicate tails of the creatures.

Then they took a half-hour's ramble in the woods, the young man bringing down an antelope with a skill which elicited the admiration of the veteran trapper, who declared it was done almost as neatly as he could have done it himself.

"I have kept up my practice at home," replied Ned. "There our hunting is somewhat different from this, but both require good marksmanship, and I can never lose the taste I acquired for it under you; but my men will be at the bend and we have little time to lose."

Calling out a jocund farewell to Shagbark, lazily munching the grass, and accompanied by Calamity, who seemed to be unusually frisky this morning, Nick plunged into the woods, and led the way toward the river along which he had spent so many years of his life.

As they reached the bank, a long Indian canoe was found there, and the six men, upon being called, speedily made their appearance. They were hardy, brown-looking fellows, all acquainted with Nick and glad to meet him.

Courageous and fully armed, they had greater fear of the North-west men than they had of any Indians, and they made particular inquiries of Whiffles as to whether they were liable to encounter them on the river or not.

The trapper had seen and heard nothing of them during the spring, but he could not guarantee either their appearance or their non-appearance at any time. So, he advised the Hudson Bay men to be on the lookout.

Suspecting that they were in advance of

the North-west traders, the little party pulled with a will down stream. They were in too dangerous territory to fancy it much, and having no wish to have another collision with the members of the great rival company, of course they used every effort to make their stay as short as possible.

"Do you see that?" asked one of the trappers, as they stepped into the canoe, pointing at the same time to a rigid scar across the upper part of his nose. "Wal, one of them blamed Nor'-westers done it, and as long as we've got such a small company, my advice is to steer clear of 'em."

They kept the keen "look-out" as they journeyed along, but were greatly relieved at the end of a couple of days, when they rounded in front of the village, without meeting any other white men.

It was arranged that Nick Whiffles should act his old part of "go-between," or interpreter, Ned Mackintosh landing with him. The first person with whom they exchanged a word was Red Bear, who came to the water's edge with his father to meet them.

As may be supposed, the young lover scrutinized his savage rival, with any thing but amiable feelings.

"Confound him!" he muttered, as he glanced sideways at him. "It would do me good to bury three or four balls from my revolver in your skull. The idea of your presuming to the notice of my Miona!"

With a heart fluttering with hope, he looked here, there and everywhere in the hope of catching a glimpse of the girl herself, but not the first indication of her was discovered, and, at a sign from Nick, he withdrew, leaving him to carry on the interview alone.

While the bartering and exchange was going on, the old trapper stood apart talking earnestly with Woo-wol-na and Red Bear.

Mackintosh feigned to take no notice of them, but, as may be supposed, his interest was no less than theirs; and, when his friend came back to him, and they put out in the stream, he could scarcely restrain his impatience.

Nick speedily explained. "I s'wore to gracios if I could hardly keep my hands off of both them old rips!" he exclaimed, with considerable feeling.

"What did they say?"

"You know they've never objected to my seeing the gal, when I axed fur her. The first thing I done, was to ax 'em to let her come down and have a word or two with me; (you see I wanted you to git a sight of her), but what do you think they said?"

"I am sure I can't tell."

"That she was gitting ready to git married to the scallawag of a Red Bear, and she hadn't time. It was mighty hard work when I heard that, to keep from making a condemned diffikilty with 'em, but I held in, and, jist for the fun of the thing, axed 'em what they war goin' to do when the friends of the gal come arter her next spring. They said, that wouldn't make no difference. She was the pledged wife of Red Bear, and ef they made any muss, she'd be put in the Death Lodge and there'd be the end of it."

Ned gasped at his teeth.

"Why didn't I shoot him at once? If I had known it, I couldn't have prevented myself!"

"Hold on!" said Nick, with a fatherly wave of his hand. "I got mad enough fur both of us. We've larned how the land lays, and now we'll go to work."

"Nick," said his young friend, after a few minutes' thought, "I feel that I can't go back without seeing Miona. As she is undoubtedly in the village, what is to prevent my getting out of the boat and going back and watching my opportunity?"

As may be supposed, the trapper opposed this, but the young fellow pleaded, and the old hunter, out of his great love, consented against his judgment, that the attempt should be made.

So, when they had ascended the river about a half-mile, and were beyond all sight of the village, he was put ashore.

It was about the middle of the afternoon, and the agreement was that Ned was to be on the spot by dark. He intended to approach as nigh the village as was safe, and there to wait in the hope of seeing her. If it were possible, he wished to communicate with her, apprising her of his presence, and what he and Nick proposed doing for her.

If he should fail to see her at all, he gave his promise to be at the spot by nightfall.

The traders had orders to continue on up the river and make all haste into British territory, where there was no danger of being molested by the dreaded Nor'-westers.

Nick Whiffles, left alone with Calamity, sat down on the ground to await the return of his young friend with the stoical patience of an Indian himself.

Not until the night was considerably advanced did he feel any misgiving. Still he waited and listened, until at last, the gray light of morning filled the woods, but still there was no Ned Mackintosh.

"What kin be the diffikilty?" he muttered, as he and Calamity took the trail and followed it; "ef they've harmed my Ned, I'll skulp every Blackfoot this side the Rocky Mountains. Hyer's the trail of the lad as plain as day; take it, Calamity, and we'll foller it to the end. Ef he's in the wigwam of Woo-wol-na or Red Bear, he's got to come out, and ef he's in that infernal Death Lodge, I'll burn it down, by mighty!"

The gray eyes of the trapper lit up with a furious gleam, and there was no mistaking his deadly earnestness, as with long strides he struck into the woods, following close to the dog, who, with nose to the ground, was on the trail of the young hunter, and keeping it with the certainty of a Siberian blood-hound.

But ah! a sudden "diffikilty" presented itself; for scarce a hundred yards were passed, when he came to a small creek, the existence of which he had entirely forgotten. A short examination showed that Ned had entered a canoe, which was evidently lying there, and supposing he had crossed, Nick adjusted his rifle and swam over; but to his surprise there were no indications of the canoe having landed, either above or below the place.

He spent the entire day in searching the banks of the creek, following both sides up and down for fully a mile, and using Calamity to assist him. The result was nothing.

The second morning he visited the village, and day after day was spent in searching for his "dear Ned," dearer now than ever, and yet he obtained not the slightest clue.

He was completely baffled, foiled, and finally in despair he turned his back upon the Blackfoot village and sought his lonely home in the wilderness, feeling as though it would be a relief to throw off the burden of life, and take his departure to his last resting place.

But he could not content himself in idleness and he soon renewed the vain hunt.

CHAPTER III.

THE "CONDEMNED DIFFIKILITY" OF ALL.

"Of all the condemned diffikilities that I've ever been in, this yer's the worst," muttered Nick Whiffles. "I thought it was purty bad when me and Calamity got separated that night in the storm, when my canoe upset, and Calamity landed in the wrong place, and my gun sunk to the bottom, and the snow was falling so fast that I couldn't see the length of my nose ahead of me; wal, that was a diffikilty, and no mistake; but this yer's worst nor that."

He heaved a great sigh, that showed how deep his feelings were, and looked plaintively out on the river flowing by. He was quite a distance from home, and was standing on the bank of the stream, upon which he had hunted and trapped so often.

He had now spent the greater part of a week in hunting for his young friend Ned, who had so strangely disappeared while searching for Miona, and yet had discovered no clue at all. He had visited the Blackfoot village, and with a daring that attested his affection, as well as his bravery, had actually put some searching questions to Red Bear.

And he answered them as innocent as a lamb, too; muttered the trapper, "but, for all that, I know that the old copper-skin could tell me all about him, ef he war a mind to open them lips of his. I don't know whether Ned has gone under, or whether he still floats his sticks, but somehow or other I think he's walkin' the arth, and I hope I shall soon see him ag'in, though it ain't sartin," he added, as if to reprove himself for this sudden spasm of hope.

"It's put me and you to our stumps, Calamity," he added, looking down with his old quizzical smile, at his dog sitting at his feet. "We've tramped the woods night and day, but it didn't do no good. Ned left in a canoe, and you and me, pup, hain't larned to track a man over the water yet, though we've tried it often 'nough."

He stood a few minutes longer, looking out on the surface of the river, with that absent, meditative manner, which showed how much his heart was enlisted in the work he had undertaken.

Then, with another great sigh, he continued:

"Poor Ned! I wonder if he knows how much old Nick Whiffles loves him! and then to think that he come all the way across the great ocean, a year ahead of his time, to see the little gal, that I s'pose he's dreamed about night and day ever since, and now who kin tell where the feller is—"

The old trapper suddenly recoiled a step, while his bronzed face flashed up as though some wonderful vision had passed before him. But it was only a thought that had come to him so suddenly, and that had so aroused him from his mournful reverie.

"Why didn't I think of it before? That's what I orter done in the first place. I must see Miona myself, and tell her every thing that's happened; she knows more about the ways of Red Bear and the Injins round her than I do."

"I'll set her to work; I've seed that gal often 'nough to larn that that's something in her more than common women. Then she loves that young Ned, just as much as he loves her, and she'll move heaven and yarth till she larns what's become of the chap that's growed into as purty a man as he war a boy. I must see her, and I'll start at once."

Throwing his rifle over his shoulder, he moved off at a rapid stride through the wood toward the point where he had left his canoe, but had taken scarcely a dozen steps, when he abruptly paused.

"What is it, pup? Something on the river, eh? Red or white-skin? Man or four-legged critter?"

Nick started again, for at that moment a canoe came in sight, scarcely a hundred feet distant, and seated in the center, who should he see but the very person whom above all others (excepting one) he desired to meet.

"Wal, ef that war ever a special Providence, that isn't any thing else. I was jist going down to the village after Miona, dyin' to see her, when here she comes."

The sharp-eyed girl was not likely to miss seeing so prominent an object as a man standing on the bank, and recognizing her old friend Nick Whiffles, she nodded pleasantly to him, and turned her canoe toward the land.

Leaping out as lightly as a fawn, she placed her little hand in his large, rough palm, and said she was always happy to see him.

"And it does an old chap like me a powerful heap of good to look on such a purty, sweet face as yours. What ar' you thinkin' 'bout, Miona?"

"I was jist thinking while paddling along in my canoe, that four years have passed since father, mother and Ned left me here. Only one year more and he is to come for me."

And the face of the girl glowed with her heartfelt happiness—happiness that was born of great, pure, eternal love for him who had won it when she was but a mere girl.

There was no doubt there—no fear that in the far-away scenes of his home, where he had been years growing and developing into a splendid young man, where he encountered "civilized" beauties every day—no thought that his right loyal heart would ever falter in its devotion to its first love. Miona was happy.

"It is now summer," she continued in the same glad voice; "soon will come the snow and ice, and we shall be locked up in our lodges, until the warm sun breaks up our rivers, drives away the snow, and the flowers come in the woods again—and then he is to come. Oh, Nick, can you wonder that I feel happy? But what is the matter, my dear friend? You look sad and troubled over something."

"So I am, so I am," he answered, with another sigh, as he drew the back of his hand in a suspicious manner across his eyes.

"Is there any thing I can do for you?" she asked in a sympathetic voice, as she tenderly laid her hand on his arm.

"No, no; it's all 'bout you; it ain't me alone, but you, too, are in the condemned diffikilty of your life. What's the use? Mighty! I might as well make a calf of myself and out with it."

And then, summoning all his self-command, the trapper told the whole story to the girl—how Ned Mackintosh, impelled by his devotion to her, had not been willing to wait until the expiration of the probationary five years, but was already in America, had come all the way from Fort Churchill, with a party of traders, and had visited the Blackfoot village feeling that he must have one look at her, and then perhaps he could wait until the coming spring; how he had talked

with Red Bear, face to face, believing the chief could not recognize him, since he had changed so much that even Nick himself had no suspicion of his identity, when he presented himself before him; and then, determined that he would see his beloved, he had left the traders, and gone off—and since then nothing had been seen or heard of him.

"It's all my fault, too," he added, in a self-reproachful voice. "I had no business to let him go, but then I love him so much that I couldn't refuse him any thing he axed."

For a few moments, the emotions of Miona were too painful to permit her to speak; after awhile she gained control of herself and said:

"You are not to blame for any thing that has happened; your services to all of us can never be overestimated. I saw you both, when you were at the village a few days ago, and little did I dream that that young man was Ned."

"You seed us then?" asked Nick, flashing up, with a new interest. "I didn't know that."

"I saw you both; why didn't you ask for me?"

"Ask for you? That's about all that I did do, and wasn't I told that you was so busy gittin' ready to be married to Red Bear that you hadn't time to see other folks?"

"Were you told that?" asked Miona, with a pale, terrified look.

"Yes; and more too. They told me that you had agreed to marry Red Bear—though I knowed that war a lie—and they didn't intend to give you up, and that if anybody tried to take you, you would be put in the Death Lodge."

"Now, I understand it all," replied the girl, speaking as though some new light had just broken in upon her mind.

"Hain't that varmint bothered you any?"

"I could not help seeing, for a year past, that Red Bear was quite an admirer, but he has always shown me a certain deference, and has never pressed matters."

"He ain't ready yet—when the time comes, he will do it fast enough. How is it you're 'lowed to run loose?"

"I have always consented to keep out of sight when we had visitors, and only when they supposed none were near have I been permitted to take my canoe, or hunt in the woods, but I nearly always have a companion, and even now I expect soon to be joined by the sister of Red Bear, who is to meet me a little way up the river."

"But, Nick," said Miona, rousing herself with an Amazonian dignity, "we must find Ned, if he is living!"

She pronounced the last clause in a tremulous voice, and looked appealingly to the trapper, who hastened to say:

"I think he's above-ground—and now, Miona, can you meet me here to-night?"

"I will, if you wish it."

"Have you larned ef he heard nothin' that woke your suspicions?"

"Not a syllable."

"Then go back to the village, and don't show you s'pect any thing, but do all you kin to find out what has come of that Ned. You're smart, and I b'lieve you kin do it. Meet me here, jist as the moon is risin', and tell me what you've larned."

The girl promised that it should be done. At that moment, she saw no way by which she could secure a half-hour's absence from the village, but she was resolved that it should be done, come what might.

Mile after mile was passed, and the night was quite advanced when he ran the little boat ashore and he and Calamity stepped out. "Yer it is," he muttered, as he made his way up a jagged mass of rocks, his heart trembling with hope and fear. "I wonder ef he's down there, and ef he is, whether he hain't gone under. Hello! here's the very hole I tumbled inter that night and come so near breakin' my neck, and gettin' inter my last condemned diffikilty."

Creeping forward, he leaned over and looked down into the dark, silent chasm, and then he called in a voice that sounded strange and hollow:

"Halloo, Ned!"

He waited, but there was no response.

"Halloo, Ned Hazel!"

Again he turned his ear and waited several moments, but no sound reached him except that faint, moaning silence, such as is heard when one listens to the sea-shell.

"Halloo, Ned, are you hungry?"

When five more minutes had passed, Nick Whiffles rose to his feet and muttered:

"I'm afeard poor Ned has had his last diffikilty!"

(To be continued.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRAIL.

WHEN Miona announced to Nick Whiffles that she had learned the fate of Ned Mackintosh, the old trapper could scarcely repress his excitement.

"Alive or dead?" he asked, eagerly.

"Alive," was the reply; "wait here a few minutes; I must get rid of her, and then I will return."

And she was gone as suddenly as she came.

Nick heard the sound of her paddle as it grew fainter and fainter, until it died out in the distance, and then he sat down like one exhausted.

"That 'ere is a woman," said he, as something like his old spirits came back to him; "hain't she follered up that trail better nor an old hunter like me kin do it? Calamity, when that female gal comes back ag'in, I want you to take your hat off and make your best bow to her."

And indulging in his quips and quiddities with the sagacious canine, he whiled away the half-hour until Miona herself reappeared.

"I can now spend several hours with you, without being missed," she hastened to say. "I retired to my lodge, and have arranged my bed so as to make it appear that I am sleeping there. I don't think the deception will be discovered until the sister of Red Bear comes to retire with me, and that won't be for several hours, and there is to be a sort of feast to-night that will keep them awake until midnight, and from which I easily excused myself on the plea of indisposition. I am very anxious to get back in time to prevent any discovery of my absence, as it may embarrass our future actions."

"But Ned—what about him?" was the impatient question of Nick.

"I did what you told me to do," she answered. "The whole day has been devoted to trying to learn something about him. I have not asked a single question of any one, but have watched and listened. A couple of hours ago I saw Woo-wol-na and Red Bear talking, and I managed to pass near enough to hear the old chief utter three words; they were:

"Grizzly Bear Cave!"

"And there I believe Edward has been

placed, and left to die a death of starvation."

"You're right!" exclaimed Nick Whiffles, enthusiastically. "I never thought of that. That's whar he is, and I'll start for him at once."

"Do you know where it is?"

"About five miles down the river, close to the bank on the other side."

"That is the place, I did not suppose you knew where it was. I came with the intention of guiding you to it."

Then followed a long consultation. Miona was anxious to accompany the trapper, and assist in the rescue of her lover. Nay, she would not listen to his denial, until he succeeded in convincing her that it would most probably defeat her very object.

The long confinement of Ned Mackintosh in Grizzly Bear Cave, with no food, had probably reduced him to the weakness of a child, so that he would be unable to render the assistance that would be so much needed in their flight; and indeed, he would only be a worse than burden to them—insuring the capture and ruin of the entire party.

"Ef he's thar, with the help of Heaven I'll git him out. I'll take him home and make a well man of him, and then, when every thing's ready, we'll move ag'in, and I s'wore to gracios, ef we don't make the condemned diffikilty that Red Bear or Woo-wol-na ever heard tell on."

"You go back to your lodge, and don't let 'em see that you've larned any thing, and be on the look-out for us in a week from now."

"I came with the intention of helping you save him," she said, in a mournful voice. "I hoped that when we got him out of the cave, we would all leave this country at once, and end this torturing suspense; but it would be wicked in me to act contrary to your advice. I have brought some food with me; give this to him, and tell him how anxious I was to share his danger and his suffering. Poor Ned! what has he endured on my account!"

And the girl sobbed like one whose heart was breaking. Nick waited until the tempest of her grief had passed, and then he urged her to return to the village, and to act as he had instructed her to do.

Reluctantly she took his hand again, and bade him farewell—renewing her protestations of love to her own cherished one, and making Nick promise to come as soon as possible to her own rescue.

She had scarcely taken her departure, when the trapper and his dog were in his canoe, paddling down-stream toward Grizzly Bear Cave.

He was compelled in his course to pass directly by the village, but he hugged the other shore close in doing so, and ran little if any risk.

In the current again, and he bent his iron limbs with such a will that the canoe seemed fully to fly over the water.

"Grizzly Bear Cave," he repeated, "don't I know where it is? Didn't I tumble into it once, when I war a-huntin' with a trapper, and ef he hadn't cotched the limbs and saved himself, wouldn't I have starved to death thar? It's a horrible place, and a man who gits in thar is purty sure to be in the last diffikilty of his life, ef he hain't got somebody to help him out. Poor Ned! I s'pose he's give up long ago, and made up his mind that Nick Whiffles is the biggest fool in the trappin'-grounds, as he is sure 'nough, not to s'pect his bein' thar."

Mile after mile was passed, and the night was quite advanced when he ran the little boat ashore and he and Calamity stepped out.

"Yer it is," he muttered, as he made his way up a jagged mass of rocks, his heart trembling with hope and fear. "I wonder ef he's down there, and ef he is, whether he hain't gone under. Hello! here's the very hole I tumbled inter that night and come so near breakin' my neck, and gettin' inter my last condemned diffikilty."

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"I am looking for Nick Whiffles; I suppose you can direct me to his cabin?"

"Yes; it's close by, but you won't find him home."

"I am sorry about that," said Mackintosh, "for I have come on special business. What time to-day will he be back?"

"Not to-day, nor to-morrow, unless it's very late to-morrow night."

The superintendent showed by his looks that he was greatly disappointed. He stood as if debating with himself:

"Come to the cabin with me, and wait there till he comes back."

Mackintosh accepted the invitation in an absent sort of way, and the two walked silently in the direction of the cabin. Reaching there, Ned entered first, and the first thing that attracted his eye, was the "baby clothes," lying upon the ground.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, as he stooped down and picked them up, "Nick went off in such a hurry that he forgot to put them away."

"Let me see them, please," said Mackintosh, who was only a step or two behind; "these are the very articles about which I came to see Nick."

Ned passed them over to the visitor, without thought. The latter held them to the light, turned very white, and trembled so that he sat down to keep from falling.

"Oh, heaven!" he gasped, looking in a strange, wild way at the boy.

"What's the matter?" asked Ned, surprised and alarmed.

"Are these the garments that were around you when you were found?"

of the pirate crew, that men say, haunt the cove after nightfall. I'll cast my net there this very night. Perhaps I may bring from beneath the waves some of the golden cargo of the buried ship."

"Oh, think of the danger!" Una murmured.

"I will brave every thing for thy sake!" he replied, undauntedly. "One last kiss and then farewell, perhaps forever."

Sadly the lovers parted.

The night came. Earth, sea and sky were plunged in darkness. The moon hid itself behind the clouds.

The hour of nine was past when the young fisherman, net in hand, stood upon the strand whereon the waters of the Pirate's Cove leaped in little rippling waves.

The boiling surf had broke in fierce fury at his feet until he reached the cove; there, all was calm and still; the waters black as ink.

"Oh that I could dive down beneath those waves and bring to the light the golden treasures of Rollo of the Red Hand!" exclaimed Hendrik, as he stood upon the shore and looked wistfully on the still waters of the cove.

"And why can you not?" asked a hoarse voice at his elbow.

Hendrik turned in astonishment and beheld a dark form standing by his side.

Ere he could frame an answer, the moon shone forth clear, and by its light the fisherman saw that the stranger was a powerfully-built man dressed in a strange fashion.

A steel breast-plate protected his chest, and from the polished surface of the steel, water was dripping; a tunic of coarse cloth covered his person to the knee, his legs were bare, the feet protected by sandals of hide. On his head a helmet of polished brass gleamed fitfully in the moonlight. A huge red beard covered the stranger's chin, and rough red locks curled from under the edge of the helmet. Drops of water were gleaming on his helmet and streaming from his hair. The stranger leaned upon a massive sword, and as the fisherman looked fearfully into his face, he saw that it was as white as the face of a corpse.

The teeth of the fisherman chattered with fear.

"Who are you?" Hendrik cried. "Speak, in the name of—"

"Hush!" the stranger said, warningly, "mention nothing holy in my presence. I am Rollo of the Red Hand, the master of the pirate ship that lies buried beneath yonder waves, ten fathoms deep. There is gold enough there to buy thy bride a hundred times—I know all—and thou shalt have the money on one condition. And that is, if thou wilt take my place beneath the waves in the buried ship, for four and twenty hours. Fear no harm; at the expiration of that time thou canst return to earth and the gold is thine. I am suffered to remain on earth for that time if I can find a mortal willing to take my place below."

"But, my Una will be pledged to another to-morrow morn."

"I can prevent that. I will stay the miller. He shall not have thy Una."

"Well, I consent!" cried Hendrik, desperately.

The moon covered the earth with darkness.

When it again shone forth, no form cast a shadow on the strand of the Pirate's Cove.

That night the wind veered to the north and a terrible storm swept along the Norway coast.

Old sailors crossed themselves and muttered that the devil himself must surely be loose.

The morning came bright and beautiful after the dreadful tempest of the night.

Quite a little knot of people were assembled in the best room of the "Golden Anchor," for the determination of old Applegren to betroth his daughter to one of her two lovers, had been reported around among the villagers.

Una sat in a corner, pale and dejected, for Hendrik, the fisherman, had not been seen that morning by any one.

Old Applegren and Charlson, the miller, sat chatting together. In his huge pocket, in a canvas bag, the miller carried the hundred rix-dollars.

Ten o'clock came.

Then old Applegren arose.

"The fisherman, Hendrik Lytken, has not come; so pay me the hundred rix-dollars, neighbor Ola, and Una is yours."

"Hold on!" cried a hoarse voice, and then the door opened with a whirl, and the fisherman, Hendrik Lytken, stalked into the room.

His face was pale as death, and the salt water was dripping from his yellow hair.

With a heavy hand he dashed down a leathern bag upon the table. The bag was rotten—soaked with water, and bursting open with the shock, gold pieces, stamped in many a strange fashion, rolled out upon the table.

All started with amazement.

"There's the hundred rix-dollars, and now I claim the fulfillment of the bargain," Hendrik cried, hoarsely.

"The saints preserve us! where got you this money?" asked the father, in wonder.

"Where you suggested; beneath the waves, in the buried ship of Rollo of the Red Hand," replied Hendrik.

"What! oh!" cried all in astonishment, except Una.

She had risen in joy at her lover's abrupt entrance, but now she stood like a statue, with her gaze fixed intently upon the face of the young fisherman.

"I tell you I dove beneath the waves, grappled with this treasure and brought it to the strand," cried Hendrik, with a fearless air, and a wicked light gleaming in his blue eyes.

"The saints protect us!" exclaimed the old man, in wonder, "I would not have done such a thing for all the gold in Norway."

"Why, would you fear?" asked the fisherman.

"The spirits of the pirate crew; 'tis said they guard the ocean treasure," replied Applegren.

"Yes, and I remember, years ago, hearing my father tell how the spirit of Rollo, the Sea King, sometimes is allowed to revisit the earth, provided he can get a mortal to take his place beneath the waves, and if, while on the earth in his mortal shape, he can induce a pure maiden to accept him for a husband, her soul goes to the Evil One, and a hundred years' respite from the fires below is given him," said the miller, earnestly.

"What folly!" cried Hendrik, scornfully. "But come, I claim my bride."

"You see, neighbor—" said Applegren to the miller.

"Say no more; a bargain is a bargain," replied the miller, calmly. "The young

man has fulfilled the condition; and, as for myself, I'll keep the dollars and do without the wife."

And so it was settled that the marriage should take place that afternoon.

Hendrik asked for a bed. He was evidently suffering under some strong emotion.

He did not even approach the maid that he had risked his soul to gain.

The fisherman laid down and slept like—well, the watching gossips thought more than once that he was dead.

The priest came at three, and with a start the fisherman awoke. And when he got up, the water was still dripping from his hair.

The bridal party entered the little church. As they passed in, Hendrik took Una's hand and imprinted a kiss upon her lips; but both his hand and his lips were cold as ice and froze the blood in her veins.

As they stood before the altar a horrible suspicion entered Una's mind.

With Una to think was to act.

Slyly, she dipped her fingers in the holy water and sprinkled the drops upon the face of the bridegroom.

With a howl of despair he rushed from the church, ran to the Pirate's Cove, leaped in, and as the waters closed around him, the horrified people, who had followed, saw, instead of the face of the fisherman, the ghastly features of Rollo of the Red Hand.

A few moments after, the waves washed to the shore the senseless form of Hendrik.

Eagerly they tended him, and at last he recovered, but never to mortal did he tell the secrets that he beheld beneath the waves.

Una on her knees thanked the blessed Virgin that had saved her from being the bride of the doomed pirate.

Hendrik and Una were married. On stormy nights, Hendrik talks in his sleep and tells of his strange wanderings beneath the waves in the buried ship.

The air was balmy and fragrant; the

heads of half the young men in her beautiful Venice.

Between herself and Isoline, strange to say, there had never existed the fond tie of sisterly affection one would naturally expect; petty jealousies, small envious, and outright quarrels, were of more frequent occurrence than affectionate demonstrations and sisterly confidences.

But, since the announcement of the engagement between Isoline and young Mazzocchi, a change had taken place in Cecilia's demeanor.

From her haughty, arrogant manner, she grew tenderer, kinder, and Isoline's heart was softened by her sister's warm encomiums on her lover.

The days sped on, and grand preparations for the wedding were commenced; Mazzocchi and Isoline planned out their future blissful career, while Cecilia suggested, advised or improved their arrangements. Of course the event was the talk of the city; all the *noblesse* were to grace the nuptials.

With their presence, happiness seemed to have covered the old ancestral castle as with a joyous wing, while Isoline, in her passionate, impetuous love, counted the days, then the hours, till she should never more be parted from Vincent. At length, clad in her trailing robes of virgin purity, decked in rare jewels, and with lightsome heart, Isoline stood ready in her chamber to await the coming of her bridegroom.

Waited, but waited in vain; for, instead of Vincent Mazzocchi hastening to greet his bride, came the news that he had flown with Cecilia! Hours before, while the maids were arraying the bride in her costly attire, Cecilia had stolen away, and by previous agreement, met young Mazzocchi at the foot of the stairs, and gone over the blue waters to a vessel bound for a foreign port.

Stricken dumb and senseless by the stupefying blow, Isoline never screamed, or cried, or moaned; only hour after hour would she sit, for days after, watching at the window where she was wont to watch for her lover's coming; refusing to have her bridal robes removed.

Then, when the unnatural apathy wore off, they learned her reason had fled with it; the light had gone from her once-beautiful eyes, the song from her lips.

For several months strict watch was kept over her. Then, one unlucky night—or was it a good fortune that brought rest and peace to her?—she stole softly from her chamber; down the cold, stone stairs, and into her little gondola, the one her cruel lover had rowed her in so often in happy

evening was coming swiftly on, silver with moonlight, cool and fresh.

Out on the bay the moonbeams glinted in a long, tremulous wave of purest silver; on the shore uprose the graceful spires of the "city of song."

Altogether, the time and scene was one never to be forgotten, and its memory steals over me to-night, sitting in this far North country, with rippling winds and whirling snows outside in the darkness.

We had made a tour of France, Spain, and Italy; and were now tarrying at Venice preparatory to a return to America.

Venice seemed to bewitch me, especially by moonlight, and I was never weary of listening to the gondoliers' monotonous chant as they glided noiselessly between the tall, gloomy houses that lined the canals, or hearing Harry tell the solemn, romantic, or revengeful legends he had heard on his tours of curious investigation.

"Gracie," he said to me, that evening, as we sat on the veranda that overhung the dark, moonlit waters, "I heard the story to-day of a daughter of the *noblesse*—I hardly know but what I should say legend, so extraordinarily weird and touching it was. I suppose you'd like to hear it?"

And lighting a fresh cigar, he sat there in the shining moonbeams, and told me the romantic tale.

Isoline Des Vosges was the eldest daughter of Count Des Vosges, one of Italy's noblest lords and haughty aristocrats. Born and raised among splendor and wealth, her every wish gratified by a doting father, she grew to maidenhood, fair and beautiful, the loveliest of Italy's daughters.

Her beauty was of the usual Italian type—clear, bright black eyes, with long, jetty, shading lashes and brows. Hair of lustrous blackness, and a complexion clear and brunette.

At eighteen she had her lovers, but from all of whom she turned in disdainful scorn; then, when in the first blushing beauty of womanhood, she saw young Mazzocchi, son of one of the grandees of Venice, her heart capitulated, and she gave herself wholly to the fervor of love's first sweet dream.

Vincent Mazzocchi was a fine-looking young fellow, of straight, kingly bearing, and high-born, haughty air. Handsome as Isoline herself, they formed a couple who attracted universal admiration wherever they were known.

Isoline had a sister several years younger than herself, and in common with the Des Vosges family, a piquant, sparkling little beauty, whose bewitching smiles had turned

the heads of half the young men in her beautiful Venice.

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Then, when the unnatural apathy wore off, they learned her reason had fled with it; the light had gone from her once-beautiful eyes, the song from her lips.

For several months strict watch was kept over her. Then, one unlucky night—or was it a good fortune that brought rest and peace to her?—she stole softly from her chamber; down the cold, stone stairs, and into her little gondola, the one her cruel lover had rowed her in so often in happy

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a manner as to make me think I saw it? or was it she, the beautiful, doomed girl?

Out on the calm bay, floated a tiny, gilded barge, and a tall figure, with its sad, haunting eyes gazing past us into the light, silvery distance, its hand outstretched as if calling down Heaven's help, its hair waving against the white, pallid face, and a hand grasping a gilded oar.

I pointed to it, as it silently floated past. Harry laughed.

"Your imagination is good, my dear. That is old Thisbe, the gondolier, hailing that sail-boat out yonder. How the moonlight silvers up his old ricketty barge! Hey, there, Thisbe! fine night!"

The old fellow made an answer, and that moment the illusion vanished, and with a half-sigh, I turned round to matter-of-fact Harry.

"Well, I don't want to hear any more delicious legends."

"Nor do I; lest they turn out to be Thisbes."

The White Witch:

OR,
THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "WOLF DEMON," "SCARLET HAND," "ACE OF SPADES," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

BENDING STEEL.

"A COUNTRESS?" said Leone, in astonishment.

"Exactly; a countess," repeated O'Connell, slowly.

"Are you jesting with me?" she asked.

"Oh, no; far from it. I only ask you a simple question. How would you like to be a countess?"

"I can not answer the question until I know the reason why you put it," replied Leone, who was utterly at a loss to account for the strange words of her visitor.

"What has your past life been?" asked O'Connell, suddenly.

"You know as well as I," Leone answered, bitterly.

"True, I do. Shall I speak of the past?"

"As you please," said the girl, quietly and coldly.

"A life of misery."

"Very true," Leone said, sadly.

"And that misery accompanied by—shall I say by crime?" the young man asked, fixing his keen eyes upon the pale face of the girl.

"Say what you like; you know the truth," replied Leone, tear-drops appearing in her great, lustrous eyes.

"Well, waive the question and not discuss it," said O'Connell, carelessly. "We'll come to the present. What are you now?"

"A most wretched woman!" and the young girl buried her face in her hands as she spoke.

O'Connell watched her, silently, for a moment; an odd, stern smile upon his features. He noted the suppressed sobs of the girl; saw her slight form quiver as she struggled to keep back the emotion that swelled within her breast. There was no pity in the face of the man as he looked upon the anguish of the young girl. No mercy in his cold smile.

"I have no doubt that you are quite right," he said, coldly, breaking the silence, "but I did not speak of your mental condition but as to your position in the world."

"You wish me to answer you?" she asked, raising her head and showing the tear-drops shining in the dark eyes.

"Yes, of course; else I should not have asked the question."

"I am a music-teacher, gaining my bread honestly—"

"And exposed to all sorts of insults," he interrupted.

"Yes, you are right, I am."

"Because you are beautiful. Few girls in all this great city, Leone, are half as beautiful as you. You work hard, yet it is a constant struggle to keep the wolf from the door; is it not?"

"Yes, and you know the reason why!" exclaimed the girl, a flash of indignation passing across her pale face.

"Yes, I believe I do borrow a little of your spare cash once in a while, when the goddess Fortune refuses to smile upon me and the courtly gentleman rakes in my money at the faro-table," O'Connell said, coolly.

"But I intend to pay you all 'up sometime.'"

"Sometime!"

"Yes, when my ships come in."

"Your ships?"

"Of course. Don't you know, Leone, that every one in this world has ships sailing on the broad ocean of time? Ships freighted with golden sands, diamonds from Golconda, and rich spices from far-off Ind, the land of Prester John? Contrary winds—blasts of adversity—keep these precious argosies from us—blow them off the coast

even when they are within sight, and about to enter the haven of safety. We can even see them—see the sinking sun gleam on the masts of beaten gold and playing in lines of rippling light on the shimmering sails of silk; then comes the blast, and darkness hides the bark from our sight. A man becomes suddenly rich, Leone; his ships have come in. Few men in this world, my girl, that in their day-dreams have not visions of the ships that may come to port at any moment and make them wealthy men."

"And your ships?" questioned the girl, who suspected that he concealed some special meaning in his fanciful words.

"Are coming in!" he cried, gayly, "and here, behold! the first installment of the cargo."

Then he drew from his pocket-book two checks, and laid them in the lap of the girl.

"Atlantic bank—three thousand dollars. First National—three thousand dollars, payable to Lionel O'Connell or order!" exclaimed the girl, in amazement, as she examined the drafts.

"Exactly, making six thousand dollars in all," said O'Connell, in a tone of triumph.

"Why, this is a small fortune!"

"Nothing to what I will have, before I'm a year older," said O'Connell, in a tone of settled conviction.

"Have you again stained your soul with a crime?" asked the girl, with a shudder.

"Hush! how dare you!" cried O'Connell, springing to his feet, in anger. "Walls have ears! be careful for your own sake, if not for mine. Foolish girl, why do you speak of the past? Let it bury its dead, and don't dig them up again!"

He paced the room for a few minutes, biting his nails, nervously, then he cooled down and again resumed his seat.

"Leone, there's a brilliant future before you. No longer a poor music-teacher, dependent upon the caprices of others, but you shall be a very queen. Leone, you are a beautiful woman; diamonds will shine with double luster in contrast to that glossy, ebony hair. You shall have diamonds, every thing—almost—in this world that you wish for. Come, isn't the prospect a bright one?"

"And the price that I am to pay for all this?" asked Leone, slowly, a strange light gleaming in her eyes.

"Price?" said O'Connell, in some confusion.

"Yes, I am not a fool, Lionel; it does not do credit to your usual judgment that you take me for one. You paint a brilliant future, and to enjoy that future I shall have to pay a costly price. Deal with me fairly; you will find it better in the end."

For a moment O'Connell watched the cold, impassive face of the girl.

the man whom, doubtless—for I know your fiery nature—you love better than you do your own life.

"Yes, that is true, for I would willingly risk my own life to save him from peril," cried Leone, quickly. "He inspires love without knowing it. The younger sister of Frances Chauncy, Agatha, loves him with all the passion of her nature, yet I do not think that he even dreams that she loves him."

"Come, accept my offer; ruin this man, and then you can have him all to yourself," said O'Connell, coolly.

"I will not," returned the girl, almost fiercely.

"You will do nothing else!" exclaimed O'Connell, a lurking devil shining in his eyes.

"What do you mean?" Leone's blood was up, sparkled in her eyes and flushed her pale cheek.

"Why, that I will force you to do my will," replied O'Connell, sternly. "Foolish girl, do you forget the bond that binds us together—the bond of blood?"

Leone's head sunk at his words.

"Shall I call back the memory of the past?" he continued, fiercely, "call back the same that made you my slave?"

"No, no!" almost shrieked the girl, again hiding her face in her hands.

"Then do my will—you must—you shall! I know the strength of the bond between us, and if you do not, you shall learn it."

"Oh, spare me!" moaned the girl.

"No, you will find no mercy in me," replied O'Connell, sternly. "Consent; brave me, if you dare!"

"I do not," the girl cried, in agony.

"You consent?"

"Yes, I will do your will."

CHAPTER XI. THE DORG-FANCIER.

THAT he was the victim of a terrible plot flashed instantly into Montgomery's mind. Small time had he for thought.

Involuntarily he thrust out his arms, and catching the sides of the trap with his hands, he held himself suspended over the dark gulf.

Little chance had he for escape, however, for "honest Tom, the Mouse," approached Montgomery with a huge club, that he had kept concealed behind him, and raised it high in air to dash it down upon the head of his victim.

With a desperate effort, Montgomery strove to raise himself from the trap and escape the blow, which seemed destined to crush him, a stunned and bleeding mass, to the bottom of the dark pit.

But Angus Montgomery was not fated to meet his death at the hands of "The Mouse."

A new-comer upon the scene changed the aspect of affairs.

Through a little window in one side of the room a man dashed into the apartment, revolver in hand.

One look "The Mouse" gave at the man who had so unceremoniously entered the room, and then, with a howl of rage, the rough dropped the club and disappeared through the door by which he had entered.

"Though lost to sight, to memory dear!" cried the stranger, striking a tragic attitude in the center of the apartment, and gazing after the fleet-footed "Mouse" with a regretful expression upon his face.

Montgomery swung himself clear of the trap and gained his feet again.

"And he never left me a lock of his hair!" continued the stranger, who was the man with the quill tooth-pick, who had followed "The Mouse" and Montgomery down Broadway.

"I believe I owe you my life!" exclaimed Montgomery, gazing with horror at the dark opening in the rotten floor, that had so nearly proved a grave to him.

"Don't mention it; these little accidents will happen in the best of families," said the man, coolly.

"Accident?" cried Montgomery! "the infernal villain planned my death!"

"He is quite capable of it. Oh! he's a sly one, he is!"

"How did it happen that you came so aptly to my assistance?" asked Montgomery.

"Well, you see, it's just like a story in one of the picture-books. I saw you and this tidy young man—who never stopped for to shake with me—such ingratitude!—a-going down Broadway. I had a sort of curiosity to know where you were going and so I followed on a-hind. When you entered these gay and festive halls—this scene of dazzling light—represented by that 'ere penny dip, I saw how the cat jumped and I just came in after you. Luckily for you, sir, the front room was empty and a little window looked from that room into this one. It was werry neatly done—quite a surprise party," and he chuckled quietly to himself.

"You thought that I had walked into a trap then?"

"A regular one and no mistake; he's a rum 'un, that 'Mouse' is. What he ain't up to, ain't worth knowing," said the man, reflectively.

"My banker absconded, recently, with quite a large amount of my money. This fellow offered to conduct me to his hiding-place. I fell into the snare—depending upon my strength to keep me from danger—and unhesitatingly accompanied him. I can hardly understand the motive for the attack, unless it was for the purpose of robbery, and I have very few valuables about me."

"Handsome tucker that of yours," said the man, pointing, "or leasways I judge so from the looks of the chain."

"Watch and chain are worth two-fifty," Montgomery replied.

"Why, bless your innocence! there's roughs 'round here that would take your life for a five-dollar note, and if they were a little drunk, they'd do it for a glass of whisky."

"I suppose we had better get out of this. This fellow may return with assistance," Montgomery said.

"Oh, there ain't any danger," replied the stranger, coolly. "The Mouse" won't come back 'cos he's 'wanted,' and he ain't going to be 'jugged,' if he knows it."

"Wanted?" said Montgomery in wonder.

"Yes, some blue-coated gents are anxious to make his acquaintance."

"Oh, I understand—the police."

"Exactly."

"Are you one of the Metropolitan detectives then?"

"Well, now, I never!" said the man, in wonder. "Do I look like one of them fellows? I wouldn't have thought it."

"I supposed so by the sudden flight of this ruffian at your appearance."

"You know what the poet says, 'the feller wot prigs, doth fear each—what-d'ye

call it—an officer!' Them ain't exactly the words, but them's the ideas," spouted the stranger, in theatrical style.

"Very true."

Then the stranger led the way into the street.

"I beg parding, but if you are going up Broadway, I'll walk along with you as far as the Metropolitan," the stranger said.

"Certainly," Montgomery replied.

Then the two proceeded onward.

"By the way, I should like to offer you something for this service, if you won't feel offended, for I am sure that I owe you my life," Montgomery said, slowly.

A true gentleman he feared to wound the pride of his unknown preserver; for every man hath his pride, be his condition in life what it may.

"Well, I don't know," said the stranger, reflectively, "I s'pose I have done you a little service, but you sees my ideas are that we're put in the world for to help one another. Now, maybe, I'll get in a fix one of these days; s'pose I comes to you and says I want a 'elping hand, will you give it to me?"

"You may depend upon that!" cried Montgomery, impulsively.

"And now if you care for to stand a glass of beer I don't care if I looks at you," said the stranger, with a good-natured smile.

Montgomery instantly signified his assent to the idea.

They dropped into a lunch-room, convenient, procured their ale and then again proceeded on their way.

"You are not in need of money, then?" Montgomery asked, with a side glance at the rather seedy dress of his companion.

"No, thank ye," replied the stranger.

"By the way, how may I call your name?"

"Angus Montgomery," replied the young man, "here's my card." Then he penciled his address on it, "and that is my residence."

"I shan't lose it," said the stranger, stowing it away carefully in a greasy wallet, much the worse for wear, that he drew from his pocket.

"And your name?"

"Christopher Pipgan; I'm a dorg-fancier," the stranger replied, with a grin.

"A dog-fancier?"

"Yes, I deals in all kinds of dorgs; perhaps you want to buy a dorg?"

"No, thank you," Montgomery replied.

"I don't have any particular place to hang out; I lives round in spots," and Mr. Pipgan grinned, good-naturedly, as he made the candid confession.

A sudden thought occurred to Montgomery.

"How would you like to enter my service?" he asked, "not as a servant but as a sort of a steward—a confidential man to look after my interests?" Montgomery had taken a great fancy to the unknown who had come so timely to his rescue.

"I can't do it—much obliged to you for the offer," Mr. Pipgan said, with a solemn shake of the head. "It wouldn't suit me. I likes my liberty too well. But, if you ever happen to need the services of a man that you can depend on, you can reach me by a note left at 'The Grapes,' in Houston street."

"You mean the little English ale saloon near Crosby?"

"Yes, and I am generally in there 'bout noon to get a drop."

"You are English, then?"

"A regular Londoner—Bow Bells and all that sort of thing, you know," said Pipgan.

By this time they had reached the Metropolitan.

"Here I stop," said the Englishman, halting.

"Good-night, then," and Montgomery extended his hand to the other. "Mind, if you want a friend come to me."

"Thank ye, and if you need any assistance, don't forget Chris Pipgan, as my pals used to call me across the water," replied the Englishman, and so the two parted.

A regular out-and-outer! true-blue and no mistake!" exclaimed the Englishman as he watched the tail form of Montgomery, until it was lost in the crowd—listening along the pavement. "Well, now if this ain't been a wonderful day for meeting old friends, I'm a Dutchman and don't know what 'blue ruin' means! Let's figure up on the day. First and foremost I meets my dasy nob—whose hair used to be dark-brown and is now a beautiful golden, quite lovely for to behold—if I hain't made a mistake in the man. Pip—old boy! bet you ten to one, you haven't! I dodges him to a house in Tenth street and I waits outside three mortal hours after my bird puts in an appearance. Then heges too brown-stone front on Twenty-third street where they keep a first-class menagerie, consisting of a lively tiger—whose claws are awful to behold when he sees a roll of greenbacks. Then I quietly and scientifically pumps a young man who sells papers at the corner, and as he happens to know my bird, I gets a full account of him. So far, all is serene. I can put my fingers on him when I wants to. Then bird, number two, flies up, but he's only a snipe, while the other's a pheasant. A dorg-man! blessed if I ain't a bird-man, too!" And with this reflection, Mr. Pipgan resumed his former station in front of the hotel.

Montgomery walked slowly along up Broadway. He was just beginning to realize what a terrible danger he had escaped.

"By Jove! I was within an ace of death!" he exclaimed.

Then two ladies coming down Broadway caught his eye.

One was Miss Agatha Chauncy, a young-sister of Frances, and the other her aunt, Mrs. Severn, an elderly lady, who took charge of the Chauncy household.

Agatha was a tall girl, just eighteen years of age. She was a complete contrast to Frances, having dark eyes and dark hair, but she was fully as beautiful as her sister.

Montgomery was somewhat astonished at seeing Agatha, as he believed her to be at Newport.

"I came away in the same train that you took. I saw you when you got into the smoking-car," she explained.

"And Frances?" he asked.

"She will be here to-night."

A few more words and the two ladies passed on.

"What a deuced pretty girl Agatha is," Montgomery mused to himself, as he walked on up the street, "and what splendid eyes she has—black as jet! By Jove!" and the young man started at the thought, "her eyes are exactly like the eyes of that mysterious White Witch. Her prediction comes near the truth. The first blow at my

fortune has been struck, but—bah! it is an accident. Who can foretell the future?"

A wise question. Who can answer it?

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER BIRD FOR THE DORG-FANCIER.

A WEEK after Montgomery's arrival in New York, walking down Broadway one fine morning, he met Tulip Roche and Herman Stoll.

"Any news of Catlin?" Tulip asked.

"No; there isn't much doubt about his escape with his plunder," Montgomery replied.

"I heard that it was fifty thousand that he let you in for," Tulip said.

"No, only twenty; that's bad enough," said Montgomery, with a laugh.

"I suppose you've lost your faith in bankers, eh?" said Tulip, laughing.

"Well, yes, to a certain extent. I'm going to be my own banker hereafter," Montgomery answered.

Tulip and Stoll exchanged glances.

"That's a capital idea!" exclaimed Tulip; "how are you going to manage it?"

"Oh, simply enough. I ordered a small safe to-day that I intend to keep in my bed-chamber, and in that safe I intend to put all my bonds, etc."

Again Tulip and Stoll exchanged looks. This was valuable news for the conspirators.

"By the way, Montgomery, have you seen this new beauty who is dazzling the eyes of all the young bloods?" Tulip asked.

"No; who is she?"

"Pon my life, it's difficult to say!" exclaimed Stoll, joining in the conversation; "there are so many reports about her. Within the last half-hour I have been informed that she is a Russian princess; a niece of the Emperor of Brazil; the daughter of an English earl; the first-cousin of the Mexican President; and a celebrated opera-singer from Italy."

"All wrong, I assure you, Stoll!" cried Tulip.

"Well, I only repeat what I have heard," he replied.

"What you say, Tulip, quite excites my curiosity," Montgomery said.

"She's enough to excite any one's curiosity!" cried Stoll, quickly. "She is the prettiest woman that I have ever set eyes on, and I flatter myself that I know a pretty woman when I see one."

"Her diamonds, too, are magnificent!" Tulip observed.

"But who and what is she?"

"Well, I've told you several things that she is supposed to be; you can take your choice," Stoll said.

"But, Tulip, what is your information regarding this unknown beauty?"

"That she is a French countess; that is, the daughter of a French count who was killed at Saarbrück; one of the first victims of this Franco-German war."

"My dear boy, you may depend upon it that you are decidedly wrong. Coleman himself told me in strict confidence, that she was a Russian princess, and he promised me an introduction," interrupted Stoll.

"Why, it seems to me that this fair stranger has created quite an excitement," said Montgomery, who was addressing all his conversation to Tulip, and quietly ignoring the presence of the broker entirely.

"Oh! she is a beautiful girl—dresses splendidly and with such perfect taste. Her diamonds, too, are magnificent and set in such an odd fashion. Her ear-rings are hollowed out in a diamond in a spiral and while her breast-pin is a mass of golden snakes, all entwined around each other, and each snake holding a diamond in its jaws. Then her necklace is one large golden snake, the tail fastening in the mouth, and curiously continued with flexible joints like the reptile itself. In the body of the snake are a multitude of little diamonds."

"Strange fancy for a lady's ornaments," said Montgomery, in wonder.

"And her style of beauty is as odd and wondrous as her jewelry."

"But how did you procure all this information?" Montgomery asked.

"From O'Connell. In some way he heard of the arrival of this beautiful unknown, and, as a newspaper man, he made it his business to 'interview' the lady. To his astonishment, he discovered that she was an old acquaintance. He had met her at Paris. In some way—these newspaper writers, you know, manage to get acquainted with almost everybody—he was introduced to the old count, her father, some years ago. Of course the lady was delighted to meet a friend in this strange country. So, you see, O'Connell is first favorite."

"If I get half a chance, I will cut him out," said Stoll, stroking his beard. "I hate to serve a friend so, but all's fair when a pretty woman is in the case."

"Here comes O'Connell now," said Tulip, as he caught sight of the young Irishman advancing up the street.

"O'Connell!" Tulip called, as he came up.

"Ah! good-morning, gentlemen," O'Connell said, gayly; "what's the news?"

"Nothing particular. By the way, I see that you are 'got up' regardless of expense—rose in your button-holes, immaculate kids. Gentlemen, I lay ten to one that O'Connell is on his way to visit the fair Frenchwoman!" Tulip exclaimed.

"You'd win. I am bound for the Coleman House!" O'Connell said, laughing. "I promised to take Miss Leone for a drive through the Park this morning."

"Leone? A pretty name!" exclaimed Montgomery.

"Yes, and the woman that bears it is prettier far than the name; but I'd better take care how I praise her too much, or I shall have Montgomery, here, as mad after her as all the rest," O'Connell said, laughing.

"Not much danger of that. You forget, I have never seen the lady."

"Ah! then there's a pleasure in store for you," O'Connell said, quickly. "Come, I'll lay aside all jealousy and be your guardian-angel. If you will walk as far as the hotel with me, I'll give you an introduction."

Tulip and Stoll groaned in concert.

"You have never offered to introduce me!" exclaimed Tulip.

"Nor me!" added Stoll.

"All in good time; you shall have introductions both of you; alone."

And then Montgomery and O'Connell proceeded up the street.

Tulip and Stoll gazed after the two, a peculiar smile upon their features.

"He bites!" said the broker, coarsely.

"How could he resist when the temptation is a pretty woman?" asked Tulip.

"Women have always ruined men since the days of Adam," said Stoll, with a sneer.

"They have never ruined you."

"They would if I had ever cared for any of them," Stoll replied. "But, I'm no milk-

sop. I never saw the woman yet that I couldn't forget when I wanted to."

"That is because you never have loved."

"Yes I have."

"Who?"

"Myself."

Tulip laughed. He knew that Stoll spoke the truth.

"By the way, did you hear what he said about keeping his valuables in his rooms?" asked Stoll.

"Yes."

"O'Connell must know about it. His crafty head will devise some means of getting at them."

"And Angus Montgomery will be so much the poorer."

"Exactly," Stoll said, with a chuckle.

"This O'Connell evidently bears Montgomery a deadly hatred."

"Yes."

"What do you suppose is the reason of it?"

"Oh, the old gentleman down below only knows. But one thing we must be careful of."

"Stoll said, mysteriously.

"And what is that?" Tulip asked.

"This O'Connell is a deuced smart fellow."

"Yes."

"Sharp as a needle."

"Well, what of it?"

"We must look out that he isn't too smart for us," Stoll said, ambiguously.

"We three have signed a compact."

"Yes."

"I intend to keep it; do you?"

"Yes, of course."

"And the one who breaks it?"

"Death."

"O'Connell will keep faith with us or pay the penalty," said Tulip, slowly and significantly.

Then the two passed on down the street.

We will follow O'Connell and Montgomery.

"By the way," asked Montgomery suddenly, "do you remember the last masquerade at Newport?"

"Yes, certainly," replied O'Connell.

"The night you wore the dress of the White Clown?"

"Yes; what of it?"

"What were you doing out on the balcony about ten o'clock?"

"O'Connell could not repress a slight movement of astonishment.

"Why, how the deuce did you know that I was on the balcony?" he asked.

"I saw you through the window. Do you remember my telling you about a mysterious woman, dressed all in white, who predicted that certain things would happen to me in the course of the year?" Montgomery asked.

"Yes, the White Witch; that was what she called herself, wasn't it?" O'Connell said. He spoke quietly and unconcerned, yet he felt that he was treading on dangerous ground.

"Yes; this strange woman told me certain things, and when I doubted the truth of her statements, she drew aside the curtain of the window and bade me look out upon the balcony and see for myself."

"And what did you see?" asked O'Connell, a peculiar smile appearing upon his face.

"You and two others; one dressed as a monk, and the other as a cavalier. You were on your knees, and I heard you say something about 'three drops of blood.'"

"O'Connell burst into a loud laugh.

"And the woman said our positions would confirm her words?"

"Yes."

"By Jove!" and O'Connell laughed louder than before; "now, this is really too good; ha, ha, ha! Why, we were rehearsing for the tableau of the *Duel in the Snow*; you remember the picture. We're going to display it the first opportunity—the tableau, you know, not the picture."

"What an ass I have been!" cried Montgomery, annoyed.

"Oh, your White Witch is a humbug, clearly."

Then the two entered the Coleman House. The carriage ordered by O'Connell was standing in front of the hotel.

About an hour afterward, the two young men, escorting the beautiful girl known as the Countess of Epernay, but whom the reader knows better as Leone Basque, descended the hotel steps and entered the open carriage in waiting.

A man sauntering, slowly, along on the other side of the street, caught sight of the little party

"Yes," answered Zoe, laughing a little at his embarrassment. "It was part of one you wrote me more than a year ago."

Brett drew the little hand more closely through his arm, and held it fast.

"Zoe, dearest, my feelings have not changed since I wrote that letter. May I hope that yours toward me have?"

Zoe's answer may be inferred from the fact that, six months later, the fashionable world received cards for the most distinguished wedding of the season—that of Brett Chapman and Zoe Delaney. Miriam Doyle was first bridesmaid, and gladly acknowledged that her friend's prophecy had been fulfilled, and that she had indeed won for her husband the best and noblest of men.

Two Strange Seamen.

BY WILLIAM COMSTOCK.

BEING astray in New York, the weather cold, and my pocket nearly empty, I shipped on board the George Warren, a little, old ship lying at Coenties Slip, bound up the Straits, and belonging to Cape Ann. She had advertised for hands, and, at the time, there was only one old man belonging to her, besides the captain and mate. The old man, whose name was Stockton, said he belonged to Cape Ann and was well acquainted with all the captain's relatives; he boasted that he could fly up the rigging and haul a top-gallant-sail as well as the youngest; and, on the strength of these self-recommendations, he suggested that he would not refuse to take a drink if I had the money to pay for it.

We went to the corner grocery and regaled ourselves accordingly. When we got back to the ship, a cart had arrived with the other hands. We assisted in lifting them on board and stowing them away in the fore-cabin.

Here was a hopeful crew: one old man who, notwithstanding his assertions to the contrary, was nearly useless on board, and never got above the leading-blocks, and half a dozen men so drunk that we were obliged to handle them like so many logs of wood, and get them under deck lest they should freeze to death.

On the next morning, the pilot came on board, and we went through the Narrows and out to sea with squared yards, the breeze being strong and directly aft. We stowed cables that day, the greater part of the crew being unable to assist in the work.

Several days passed before the toppers completely recovered, although they would go aloft and do what they could. On such occasions I expected, every moment, to see two or three of them tumble from the yards; but they were, for the most part, experienced seamen, and as much at home on the reefing mast as a young lady is in her boudoir.

As they recovered from the effect of their spree on shore, two of them exhibited first-rate ability as seamen. One of them was quite good-looking; the roses came to his cheeks, and his eyes, as blue as the sea, shone with intelligence. The eyes of the other had a leaden appearance, almost like the eyes of a dead man. He was a good seaman, but did every thing mechanically, and seemed to take no interest in anything, not even in eating, or in drinking the grog which was liberally served out to us by the captain. He seldom spoke, and when anybody addressed him, he simply looked at the speaker with those dead, expressionless eyes of his, and turned away with a half-smile to his blue-eyed companion. The latter stated that he had sailed several voyages with Mendum—the name by which the former had shipped—and that he was a man of first-rate education. It was difficult to believe that. One would have judged from his appearance that he was equally devoid of intelligence and of sentiment.

After we had fairly got into the "deep, deep sea," it was observed that Mendum and his friend talked a great deal together during the night-watch. Seated apart from the rest of the crew, the low humming of their voices was heard during the greater part of the watch. It was also noted that they became suddenly silent when any one approached them.

When old Stockton, who belonged to the other watch, heard of this, he held up his hand, with the stiff fingers crooked, and shook it in a peculiar manner. What he meant by that, nobody knew. Therefore, the gesture was the more significant, as it left a free play for the imagination.

One day, when I was standing at the helm, the captain asked me if I knew any thing about the foremast hand who called himself Mendum. Of course, I answered in the negative.

"It seems almost as if I must have sailed with him before," his face looks so natural," added the captain, as he turned away.

On the next night, I was standing at the helm during the middle-watch; we were but three days' sail from Gibraltar; the mate was walking the deck to keep awake; the breeze was light, and we were going only four knots by the log. The night was cloudy and very dark. The hands who had been talking on the windlass had become suddenly silent.

This lasted several minutes, when I heard the sound and felt the jar of something striking the carline directly under my feet.

Was the captain nailing up something in the cabin? It soon passed from my recollection, and, probably, would never have returned but for events that soon followed. The mate had got as far as the mainmast, in his walk, and paused there as if his attention had been attracted by something. In the next moment he seemed to be scuffling with somebody. That was strange: I had never known him to use any freedom with the foremast hands. As I could scarcely see him, but the noise as if two men wrestling continued a moment, and then I heard a heavy splash alongside, as if some heavy body had fallen into the sea.

After that all was silent. In about a quarter of an hour a man whom I took for the mate came aft, and, looking in the binoculars, said:

"Keep her off!" It was a strange voice. I replied that Mr. Priestly had ordered me to steer due east.

"Did you ever die?" said the man, in a tone of concentrated rage. I then perceived that the speaker was Mendum. As I looked up, surprised, he continued: "You will hereafter take your cue from me, young man."

I then knew that something direful had taken place, and remembered the sound which I had heard in the cabin. It struck me, at once, that in raising the ax to chop off the head of the sleeping captain, the eye

of the ax had touched the beam overhead. So it proved. Mendum and his friend had crept along between decks and got into the cabin, where they found the captain and steward asleep. Mendum had split open the head of the former with a sharp broad-ax, while his companion cut the throat of the latter. They then came on deck, and having thrown a bag over the head of the mate, and finally tied a rope around his neck to prevent him from giving an alarm, threw him overboard.

I obeyed the orders of Mendum and put up the helm. We steered for the coast of Africa, intending to take in a few negroes and carry them to Cuba.

The crew acquiesced in every thing Mendum proposed, especially as they now perceived that he could talk, and that he was an excellent navigator.

One fine warm evening, as we were nearing the coast, Mendum, having drank rather more than common, gave us part of his history.

"Hold!" cried old Stockton, springing to his feet; "you say that your real name was Prichard, that you had a brother, named Jonas, who forged a paper, and was permitted to go to sea, instead of being sent to State Prison?"

"Ay, old fellow—what then?" demanded Mendum, rather offended at the interruption.

"Well, sir," added the old man; "Jonas did go to sea, and finally grew up a smart man, and sailed out of Cape Ann, and commanded the George Warren."

"What! this ship! how long ago?" cried Mendum, *alias* Prichard.

"Why, you must know that after having been up for forgery he changed his name," said Stockton.

"Very likely," answered the other, with a sigh; "my poor brother! that's the reason I have never been able to fall in with him, though I have sought him high and low, for he was all the world to me."

Old Stockton shook his head, sadly.

"What do you mean by that? Did you not say he once commanded this ship?"

Where is he, now, do you suppose?"

These questions were put in breathless haste by Prichard, who had risen to his feet and approached the old man.

Again old Stockton shook his head in a gloomy manner.

"Why, that must have been Jonas that we massacred and gave to the fishes!" screamed the brother-mutineer of Prichard. For a moment, the brain of the bloody man seemed to reel; then, with a howl like that of some wild beast, he flew to the ship's side, and leaped into the boiling gulf below.

The waters closed over his head, and the mutineer sunk forever. We then rose and bound the surviving mutineer, and soon afterward falling in with the British brig *Buzzard*, a captain was put on board of us, and we returned to the United States. The mutineer committed suicide before we came in sight of land.

The Three Gold Links.

A STORY OF EARLY CALIFORNIA.

BY "BRUIN" ADAMS.

THE discovery of gold amid the mountain valleys and "river bottoms" of California, caused a stream of emigration to flow thither that has never, perhaps, been equaled in the history of the world.

Not only the restless and adventurous from every section of the globe rushed to the gold placers, but men outlawed by society went and found there a broad and fertile field in which to exercise their evil designs.

There could be but one result attendant upon such a state of things. Utter lawlessness became the prevailing condition of society, while the law, its powers not yet organized, was shown to be entirely useless, or, rather, incompetent to protect life or property.

The people suffered long and patiently under the reign of cutthroats and desperadoes, but at length were forced to adopt the fearful resolution of taking the law into their own hands, and on their own authority inflict such punishment as was necessary to suppress crime and its attendant horrors.

Such, then, was the condition of affairs, when the incident I am about to relate took place, an incident so terrible in its nature, so appalling in its ending, that even the hardened Californian who has become used to almost any and every thing that is startling in its nature, shudders as he recalls to memory the sight he witnessed on that stormy night. San Francisco was not then the splendid city that we now see, nor was her bay filled with the ships of every nation upon the earth. A mere collection of frame houses, wooden shanties and mud huts, scattered promiscuously here and there, was all. But already wealth had begun to pour in, gold nuggets and bags of shining dust, and for these a place of security had to be found.

This was accomplished by converting a heavily built log-house, carefully guarded by thick windows and iron-studded doors, into a "bank," where miners and speculators could deposit their treasures in comparative security.

The bank was always watched by what was considered a sufficiently strong force, and the people looked upon the hitherto difficult problem of setting burglars and thieves at defiance as solved.

But this fancied security led to most disastrous results.

One night during the prevalence of the equinoctial storm, when the raging wind and cutting sleet had driven the hardest and bravest within doors, the bank was forcibly entered by a band of English burglars.

There were three watchmen within the building, all tried men, and armed to the teeth.

People living in the vicinity said, the next day, that they heard, or fancied they heard, during the storm, and late at night, the sound of firearms, and shouts and curses of men in combat.

But these things were of common occurrence, and so preferring their comfortable beds to venturing out in the wintry blast they shut their ears and fell asleep, while the rattle of revolvers and the shrieks of dying men were borne unheeded away on the wings of the storm.

The following morning a fearful sight met the gaze of those whose duty led them to enter the bank.

Five corpses strewed the floor, three of the bodies being instantly recognized as those of the watchmen, while the other two, burly, brawny ruffians, evidently of the worst class, were entirely unknown.

A fearful struggle had taken place.

The floor, the walls, desks, chairs and counter were literally covered with blood.

Much of the furniture had been smashed or otherwise injured, while here and there the small, round hole in woodwork, or the broad break in plaster, told how hot the fire must have been when so many balls missed their mark.

The strong boxes were broken open and completely rifled of their precious contents. It is impossible to describe the excitement that spread like wild-fire over the town. Men, at first rendered almost helpless by reason of the shock, quickly recovered and the search for the murderers was begun.

I was then quite a young man, almost a youth in fact, but I remember the frenzied zeal with which I went to work.

Every one seemed actuated by but one purpose, and that, the capture of the desperadoes.

Ropes were prepared, blocks rove at convenient places, all ready for the execution as soon as a victim was procured.

But the search was in vain. No traces of the perpetrators were to be found, and men, even the sharpest detectives, and there were some *natural* ones there, fairly owned themselves at fault.

But I speak too hastily. There *was* a clue, slight though it was, and this thread was grasped and followed.

Upon the body of one of the dead burglars—and I may here remark as a singular fact, that both of them had been shot in the right eye—some one had found a small piece of gold chain, three links in all, of peculiar and evidently foreign workmanship. These links of gold, which were destined to be literally links in a chain of evidence that would convict a murderer, were carefully preserved, though, at the same time, freely exhibited to all who expressed a desire to see them.

For months the search continued. Not only the city, but the surrounding country, the mining districts and neighboring towns, were closely searched and strictly watched. But all in vain.

The winter wore away, and spring came. Men had ceased to talk so much of the "bank murder," as it was called, though the desire to capture the murderers was as strong as ever, when suddenly the excitement was again renewed, and the flame of popular desire for vengeance burned as brightly as it had during the early days of the affair.

It seemed that a sailor, who had gone to view the celebrated links of the chain found upon the dead burglar, had at once asserted that he knew the man to whom they belonged, or had once done so, that he had seen him in the city only a few days before, and more than all else, he was still wearing the remainder of the chain.

With a wise forethought the sailor was at once seized and held in mild imprisonment, for fear the murderer might hear of his identification by reason of the man's gossiping. That night the vigilance committee was reformed, and steps taken to at once apprehend the suspected individual.

It was a singular coincidence that the night upon which the vigilance committee took the trail that was to end in the murderer's capture, or rather death, a storm, fiercer, if possible, than the equinoctial, was abroad upon the earth.

In an open lot, in which is now the lower or southern part of the city, there stood at this time a small cluster, some half-dozen, of rough pine-plank cottages, if I may give them so respectable a name, and alongside of them, a more imposing structure, built of heavy logs and thick rafters, two stories and a half high.

The building was first erected for I know not what purpose, but the collection were now occupied by a colony of desperadoes of the worst class, a species of headquarters, from whence they sallied out on their unlawful expeditions, or held counsel with their fellows as to future operations.

Once upon the track of their man, the stern regulators paused not long in running him to earth.

From gambling-hell to drinking-den, and thence to houses of ill-repute, they tracked the murderer with the unerring certainty and eager desire of blood-hounds.

In more than one place, the fatal chain was minutely described. The fellow wore it openly upon his vest, though he must have known the danger of doing so.

He was said to be a man of herculean build, possessed of enormous strength, "black muzzled," and fierce in aspect, always heavily armed, and seemingly afraid of neither man nor devil.

How true the description was will be seen. At length the trail was broken for a short time. At a low den, upon the outskirts of the town, he had been seen an hour or two previous, but from there all trace was lost.

A few moments' consideration, of low, stern conversation among the band, numbering some twenty-five or thirty determined men, resulted in one raising the cry of:

"To Hell's Half-Acre! He is there!"

And away the crowd went toward the cluster of houses we have already described, and which was known by the forcible appellation above. In sight of the place the regulators halted to organize and lay their plan of procedure. This occupied but a few moments, and at once they moved silently, steadily forward.

The night was intensely dark. The drifting and rain, the roaring of the wind, as it came sweeping in from oceanward, the crash of thunder and vivid flashes of lightning, all served to make the night a fearful one.

Not a light was to be seen in any of the buildings. All was dark, dreary, and apparently deserted.

But such was far from being the case. The thieves had, somehow, got warning of what was in the wind, and several of the most desperate had collected in the large log-house, determined to defend their den to the last.

As the regulators spread out upon either hand, and drew their cordon around the buildings, a sudden sheet of flame leaped from between the crevices of the heavy logs, and a volley of balls swept through their midst.

The sound was magical in its effect. Out from the town a tumultuous crowd of excited men, women and young boys rushed, utterly regardless of the storm, only eager to see the celebrated "bank murderer" brought to justice.

In about ten minutes there were five hundred people, wild with excitement, shouting, yelling, cursing, swaying back and forth about that old house, from which, now and then, a shot would come, sometimes with fatal effect.

Those within it knew their doom, and were reckless of consequences. Their only desire seemed to be to kill as many of their assailants as possible.

One of the regulators, bearing a torch in his hand, stepped out of the ranks and advanced toward the house.

His object was to demand the surrender of the man they were in search of. The others, he said, even though they had fired upon the people, might go free.

The words were hardly out of his mouth, before he fell, pierced by half a dozen balls fired by the besieged.

This was the signal for a general onslaught.

Like a pack of famished tigers, the infuriated multitude rushed upon the house.

Axes, sledges and crow-bars were rapidly plied under a heavy fire from within. Men fell here and there, and were carried back out of the way, while others took their places, and worked steadily on.

No barrier could have long withstood such an attack.

It gave way, and with a yell that shook the solid structure to its very foundations, the maddened crowd rushed in.

Instantly the quick detonation of revolvers began to be heard, and then the fight became close and deadly.

But numbers told. One by one the robbers fell, until only one remained, a tall, powerfully-built man, his face nearly concealed by a heavy black beard, across whose waistcoat hung a long *linked chain of gold*.

With the agility of a deer, after seeing the last of his confederates sink under the regulators' fire, he sprang to the foot of a narrow stairway that led above, faced his assailants with cocked pistol, and slowly began the ascent, going up backward.

A dozen pistols were instantly leveled at him, when a voice rung out, "Take him alive! Don't shoot!" causing the uplifted weapons to drop.

A scornful laugh was the desperate man's only reply as he disappeared across the landing above.

In all that crowd of men, many of whom were noted for their "game," not one was daring enough—foolhardy were the better term—to follow that man up those stairs.

To the first, second, third, and perhaps more, it would be certain death.

"Burn him! burn the villain!" now began to be heard on every side.

The hint took in an instant.

Out of the house they rushed, the last ones raising the shattered door into its place, and fastening it from the outside.

A moment later the torch was applied in half a dozen places.

The dry pine wood caught readily, and the red flames, fanned by the rushing wind, lapped upward and around with fearful rapidity.

The crowd drew off, and silently awaited the end.

Higher and higher mounted the devouring element.

It twined round the window-frames, the glass crackles and bursts, the long tongues leap into the upper rooms, and shooting upward sear the eaves.

A deathlike silence prevails over the crowd, but a moment since so noisy and turbulent.

Suddenly a loud shout announces that something has occurred, and the next instant the stalwart form of the doomed robber was seen to emerge from a hole in the roof, blackened with smoke and soot, gasping for breath, but still defiant, still hurling bitter curses upon those below, *game* to the last.

With an effort he crawled to the comb, and, regaining his feet, drew his form to its utmost height.

Raising his hand as though to command attention, he spoke some words, the exact purport of which could not be gathered by reason of roar of the flames and shrieking wind, but they were plainly anathemas upon those who had so hunted him down.

Thus he remained while the gathering flames encircled the spot upon which he stood, their sharp teeth cutting away, inch by inch, the frail footing that lay between him and the hell of fire below.

A rafter has given way, another and another. The roof swells and totters, rises and falls, like the swell upon the ocean.

A deafening crash is heard, a loud, sharp report quick follows, as the murderer discharges the last charge of his revolver into his own brain, and down, down he falls into the glowing red-hot furnace, that yawns to receive its prey.

Cruiser Crusoe:

OR, LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST.

NUMBER FIFTY-TWO.

THE morning broke at last, on which Polly was to become mine by the dearest of ties known to humanity here below. It was a bright, glorious day. I had risen at break of dawn to make the final preparations. On a small hillock within the fortifications, we had erected a kind of chapel with an altar. It was merely four upright bamboos supporting a roof, but to us it appeared a marvel of architecture.

All had arrayed themselves in their best, while such happy, grinning faces as the negroes presented, all shinning with recent washing, it would have been hard to find. There is nobility for marriages, christenings, or funerals like the blacks. Any of these occasions are for them festivities. They revel in such doings.

They had all manufactured some present for the bride and bridegroom, while they moreover had devoted much time to the perfection of my masterpiece, which was to dazzle the eyes of the bride.

We all met at breakfast, and then after a brief delay rose to move in the direction of the altar, where the old captain with a prayer-book in his hand awaited us.

All were as grave, solemn and sensible of the importance of the occasion as if we had been in a stone church, made by man's hands.

Were we not beneath a more glorious canopy than any which architect ever erected? The blue sky, the bright sun, the waving trees, the song of birds, was something glorious to behold.

She was surrounded with women. I had all the males of our happy colony around me. Even Andrew had on this occasion laid aside all jealousy and become my right-hand man. I even thought I saw him cast longing eyes at my sister Ellen.

This was a fortunate change in his mood, which might lead to most happy and satisfactory results. At all events I trusted so.

The captain said a few words. The service then began, and at the termination of a quarter of an hour, we were man and

wife. It had been arranged that games, such as arching, running, leaping, and wrestling should follow, until the sumptuous meal which had cost the negroes a sleepless night, was ready.

The elders took their seats, and beside them my wife—how it sounded. It would have been ungracious on my part to have abandoned my younger friends and remained seated, so I became the most jovial of the band. All were full of spirits, and when I proposed a dance—because the girls then could join—the mirth was uproarious.

Then the banquet was spread upon the green under the shade of the trees, and when every thing was ready all seated themselves. I need not say that there were toasts, and speeches, and laughter, and tears, for such is the everlasting result of weddings in all countries.

Then appeared, amidst thunders of applause, my sledge, to which was attached the zebra and her foal. It was a splendid affair. It had been made in secret, and excited general delight. Polly took her seat, I joined her, and then—why linger to tell all they said. Everybody will readily guess what passed.

But of the joy, of the delight with which we wandered through that garden of Eden, my island bower, I could tell tales that would make me appear garrulous. We explored the limited space in every sense. We grew familiar with every tree, with every green and grassy spot, where we could bathe our feet in pellucid water. And then our trips upon the lake, our moonlight rows without fear on those waters, where even the savage seldom came—they live in my memory now, and cause me to look back with joy unutterable to the hour which made Polly my dear wife.

At the end of a week we received a visit from the whole colony, who came in state, except Andrew and my sister. They had gone to the grassy farm by the lake to spend their honeymoon. For months they had been secretly affianced.

At the end of another week we returned to the settlement, and after a few days devoted to duties which were imperative, we sent an express to invite the newly-married couple to a banquet, and in honor of their arrival, prepared a novel reception.

To the flag-staff on the summit of the great fig-trees, we attached a flag, one of the few things saved from the wreck, which I had brought ashore without suspecting its value. Then, when the young people came in sight, we fired a perfect salvo.

Hark! what is that—a gun?

Heavens! it is a gun at sea, and at no great distance! Up to the top platform of the fort, up through the branches to the staff, up, up the staff itself, until I could go no higher, and then down again as rapidly.

It is—it is a ship!

What a white cloud of peace were those great, white sails! Though now greatly attached to our little Island World, thoughts of home—of friends—came up with tumultuous force. Were our sea-girl kingdom a very Arcadia of Delight, we would have welcomed that white-winged messenger from the other land.

And such a welcome as we gave! Not with cannon and bonfire, but with tears of delight, and congratulations, and inquiries, and songs of joy—all strangely commingled.

It was the good ship *Grace Mercy*—sweet name!—bound homeward from Ceylon, but ordered to touch at Sierra Leone. This threw her right across our latitude, and beholding our apparently well-wooded and watered island, steered for it to fill up the water-tanks and secure some fresh fruit. It was a happy surprise to the jolly sailors, as well as to ourselves, and the proposal to return with them was received with joy.

We can not describe the three days spent in breaking up our settlement, in transferring our many dear souvenirs of our lonely shipwrecked life—to the ship. I, of course, found place for several of the animals whose service and fondness for me had made them friends indeed.

And then we set sail. *Homeward bound!* Oh, echo it, ye winds; whisper it ye waters; repeat it ye watchful stars! *Homeward bound!*

Crusoe is Crusoe no longer. He is now a well-to-do citizen of the New World, having those around him who love to hear papa and mamma tell the strange story of their long exile on the Lost Island.

THE END.

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TRUE AS STEEL;

DULCEM FECIT.

BY QUIRRELLER.

"When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And goes to vote election day,
She'll soon do all the work 'by golly."
And man will hunt and fish and play.
The streams are clear, the forests breezy,
The right to rest will be our plan—
We all delight to take it easy—
Oh, dulce fecit, you're the man.

Say, comrades, won't the time go fleeting,
With naught to vex or bring a care;
No work to do, the best of eating,
Earned by our wives and daughters fair?
Mechanics, leave your workshope greasy,
Street-scrapers, rest because you can,
Your time has come to take it easy,
Oh, dulce fecit, you're the man.

How dark the past benighted ages!
Why never think of this before?
How wise are these, our modern sages,
What blockheads were the wits of yore.
The social state, so old and wheezy,
Rejuvenates an wisdom's plan;
What joy to know we'll take it easy—
Oh, dulce fecit, you're the man.

Go, sister, better your condition;
Reverse old nature's homelike rule;
Play man, love, but if that's your mission,
You'll end a drudge, or I'm a—
But still I feel so sneezy, pleazy,
I'll not upset "progression's" plan,
We're all about to take it easy,
Oh, dulce fecit, you're the man.

The Drugged Draught.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

"Ahoy, there, cousin Will! Why, bless my eyes, don't you know a fellow?"

This spoke a handsome sailor of twenty-two, or thereabouts, clad in blue jacket, trousers, and a round cloth cap set carelessly upon wavy locks of chestnut hair, beneath which the manly face, while glowing with health, was browned to the hue of an Indian's.

Laughing joyfully, he grasped the hand of his hearer—a good-looking young man of about his own age.

The place of meeting was on the sea-beach, a mile or so to the right of Sag Harbor, where the great waves of ocean came tumbling and roaring with the noise of hollow thunder.

Will Branch started back, turning ghastly pale, and evidently not at all inclined to return the joyful greeting of his cousin.

"Good heavens, Jack! is it possible?" he gasped; "why I heard you were lost at sea!"

"So it was thought," answered Jack Willow, carelessly, hiding a piece of a plug of tobacco; "but they say a bad fish is sure to turn up, and here I am, do you see, sure enough, hove in sight again this morning off old Sag, which I should never have reached but for a Chilean schooner that picked me up, after I had clung three days to a spar, that dropped off our poor old ship, the Bombay, before she went down. Alas! Will," he continued, wiping his eyes, "all went down in that craft but unworthy Jack Willow, the worst of the whole crew!"

"Cheer up!" cried Will, although his crestfallen countenance belied his strained manner of cordiality. "Your father will be glad to see you! You will have a happy time!"

"Take me at once to the best of old men!" cried Jack, with an energy that almost blew Will off his feet. "Come, my lad, lively!"

"Well, the truth is," said Will, turning blue, "that your father is sick, and the shock of his seeing you, now, might carry him off. You had better remain *deady* until he recovers somewhat, which, at the most, will be in a week. There's a public house off there"—pointing southward—"where you can go and stay until that time. Give a false name."

"Will," said Jack, hesitatingly, "sailing under false colors isn't hardly to my taste. However, any thing to help father. Won't you go with me?"

"I would like to, but haven't time. However, I'll see you soon again."

With these words they shook hands and parted.

"Good-by," said Jack, waving his hat to a schooner, a mile or so from shore, whence he had put off for the beach, and in which vessel he had just come down from New York. Already the schooner was again getting under way, her crew hauling back, by a long rope attached, the little boat in which Jack had pulled himself ashore.

Jack went to the tavern, and there put up under the name of Tom Catch.

A restlessness possessed him, all day. Finally, away he went, until he came to a little public house, in which lived Fanny Brown—once the loveliest girl near Sag Harbor, but who, during the three years she had mourned her lover, Jack Willow, as lost, had wasted to a mere shadow.

It was near dark when Jack caught sight of her, sitting under a clump of trees, where she and he had often met, as boy and girl-lovers.

He made himself known. She gave a little scream. She seemed ready to go mad with joy. Words may not depict her happiness. Bidding her not mention his return to a living soul, promising to meet her next day at the same time and place, Jack left her, after passing nearly three hours in her company.

Meanwhile Will Branch was planning a dark scheme. Jack returned, must come into possession of the large estate, besides the thousands of dollars, owned by old Willow—the wealthiest man in the neighborhood. To prevent Jack from getting this fortune, Branch—a rascal from a child—made up his mind to have the young sailor killed by a ruffian—a sort of smuggler, named Thad Dreck.

He went to the smuggler, who agreed, for a certain sum to "do the job." There could be no danger in it, Will said, as Jack's identity was not known at present by a living soul but himself.

The smuggler dwelt in a small hut among the rocks, near which Fanny Brown, after her meeting with her lover, sauntered to think, with unseen happiness, upon his return. Suddenly she found herself near the hut, and was about drawing back, when her ear was caught by her lover's name, pronounced by the ruffian Dreck. This led her to listen, when she heard the whole of the dark plan, which was wound up by the agreement to waylay and kill Jack on the following night, tie a stone to his neck, and throw his body into the sea!

Almost wild with terror, on his account, she flew hither and thither for hours, that

night, vainly searching for his place of abode, which he had kept secret even from her.

At last she returned home, looking so worn and haggard, that her parents thought she had now really gone mad. In spite of all protestations, they locked her up in her room, fearing that she would go astray and drown herself. Finally, by a doctor's advice, they forced her to take an opiate, which made her sleep for many long, long hours. Her ravings about her lover being in danger of his life from Dreck, etc., had of course been deemed conclusive evidence of her insanity, as all believed that he was lost at sea.

Vainly she had explained that he had returned; this had only made them shake their heads all the more incredulously.

Poor Fanny slept till sundown the next day. When she waked, her first thought was of Jack's danger, and she uttered a scream, which soon drew her parents to the room. She perceived that it would be useless to make them believe her story, so she pretended to be calm and quiet, in hopes that they would let her out of her confinement. The change in her manner had this effect. She was finally permitted to go down to wait on customers. Now her whole face gleamed with hope. With her flushed cheeks, starry eyes, and her long, wavy hair falling down her shoulders, she was indeed strangely lovely to see.

Soon her parents retired from the public room to a back parlor to comment upon Fanny's improvement.

Now was the time. She was about leaving the house to meet her lover under the trees, as had been agreed upon, when in came Thad Dreck, a stout stick in his hand, an old felt hat over his low, dark forehead, his coat-collar drawn up over his ears.

Fanny shuddered, feeling sure that he was ready to start upon his criminal mission. "Glass of ale!" he cried, roughly, standing sideways, leaning against the counter, his right arm upon it, his ugly stick raised to his lips.

"Wait a minute!" she said, and flew upstairs.

She procured the opiate, and when she returned, the ruffian Dreck being still in the position she had left him, she was enabled, unseen, to pour the contents of the vial into the mug, after she had drawn the ale from the cask!

The ruffian drained the mug hastily, threw down the change to pay, and quitted the public house.



THE DRUGGED DRAUGHT.

Fanny was about flying to the door to watch him, when her parents entering, called her back.

Her wild manner again excited their suspicions. They would not believe a word she said regarding Jack, Thad Dreck, etc., etc., but, as before, attributing her words to a disordered mind, locked her in her room.

Really almost mad with anxiety, she paced her apartment, thinking the worst—fearing that the opiate might not take effect soon enough upon one of Dreck's iron constitution.

She was partly right. The drug did not begin to effect Thad until some time after he had left the public house.

Crouching in shadow, he, unperceived, saw Jack on his way to meet Fanny. The sailor walked along, whistling merrily. The rocks were in the way. Thad kept shifting his position, that he might the better take aim with the small pistol he carried, at the young man. Meanwhile a strange drowsiness was stealing over the ruffian. Feeling that it must soon overcome him, he staggered forward, as Jack moved along a rock bordering the sea, and took aim at his head with the pistol.

Now his heavy eyelids almost closed; he reeled. There was no time to lose; he pulled the trigger. Jack, whirling half-round, fell forward. With a loud cry, he drew himself along toward Dreck, who now, stupid, nearly senseless under the influence of the opiate, had rolled over the side of the sea-rock, clinging to the edge. Before Jack could reach him, he let go his hold, and fell into the dark waters beneath.

Jack, who, owing to the ruffian's unsteady aim, was uninjured, vainly looked for the form of the would-be assassin, who never rose again.

Not meeting Fanny under the trees, he went straight to the public house. The old people knew him, notwithstanding the changes time had made. Poor Fanny was permitted to come down, when explanations ensued.

Will Branch fled from the country before he could be arrested. Jack made glad with his presence the heart of his old father, who subsequently urged no objection to his marrying pretty Fanny Brown.

Already an intelligent girl, she improved rapidly under the tuition of the old man, who was a ripe scholar, and made Jack one of the best of wives.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Indian Gratitude.

BY RALPH KINGWOOD.

"INJUNS allers remembers a good turn, an' they'll allers pay back of they kin," said our old friend, Joe Logstone. "I owns that they're generally a pizen, mean set, an' yer all knows I never lets one uv 'em slide when I gits a bead onto him, but that was a Injun on't that war as nigh white es a red-skin could be, an' what's more, he saved me from a burnin' that would 'a' made cooked meat outen me in no time."

"Want ter hear it, do 'ee? Well, I don't see no reason why I shud be ashamed of tellin' it, an' I tell yer how that Cheyenne saved me the scorchin'."

"Ye all knows how the young men uv the tribe hes to torture themselves afore they kin go on the war-path 'long with the old ones, an' they doose it by cuttin' slits in thar flesh an' hangin' up by puttin' lariats through the holes till the hides an' muskles bu'st loose."

"Sometimes they ties bufler skulls an' the like to the holes in thar bodies, an' then goes 'arin' over the perrairy till they bu'st loose, an' then ag'in they ropes themselves to a muskin's tail, an' lets him drag 'em about until they bu'st loose too."

"It ar' a scandalous practice, an' nobody but a heathen savage 'd be ketcht at it."

"You see, boyees, I've had ter speak uv this so you'd onderstan' what kin arterward."

"One winter the Cheyennes made a big raid down on the settlements, an' on the road they fell foul uv my ranch on the Sweet Water, an' drew off the only good hoss I hed."

"I war away seein' to my traps at the time or they'd 'a' ketcht me too."

"I war powerful mad 'bout losin' the critter, an' arter waitin' till I calkerlated they war on the return-path, I lay off in the brush, hopin' to git my claws on the gray mar'."

"Sho 'nuff they did kim by my war, an' I see the mar'; a big chief war straddle her, an' the imp looked proud 'nuff to make a feller b'ieve he owned the whole arth."

"No way I could fix it could I manage ter ketch the cuss nappin' long 'nuff for to nab the mar'. He eat his bufler alongside uv her, he slept with the larfat around his arm, an' rid her from sun-up till night."

"I followed thet Injun from whar my

work, they laid fur me, an' they got me, too. I g'in 'em a powerful tussle, but thar wur three uv 'em, big 'uns, an' they throw'd an' roped me fast an' tight."

"The't night thar war a big rummpus over me, fur some on 'em know'd who I war, sorter carried 'em 'mark, you see, an' sich dancin', an' yellin', an' hootin', ye never heard."

"The't council sot, an' I wur told to git redly to run the gantlet next mornin'."

"'Twur a powerful big village, an' the line wur a long 'un, reachin' from the timmer across the open plum into the village."

"Ye all knows, boyees, what it ar' to run the gantlet. No joke, when the Injuns ar' mad, you may depend."

"Well, I made it, but wur terribly hacked an' cut up, but I saved a couple uv the imps, an' that sot 'em yusin' ever. About the first jump or two, I downed a young feller an' got his club, an' you kin bet high the't I used it in that er race. Es I said, two uv 'em went on the't journey to the huntin'-grounds, heads bu'st d'ar open."

"Next day it wur the stake, an' by the time the sun wur straight up, they hed me tied up, an' the squaw uv one uv the warriors I hed rubbed out the day afore, techt off the pile."

"The seamed and weather-beaten countenance of the old trapper grew serious as he recalled this terrible episode in his adventurous life, and he paused a moment, as if loth to relate it."

"Well, boyees," he resumed, "thar's meny uv you know how often Joe Logstone hes stood up fa'r an' squar' ag'in death an' never flickered, but I'm willin' to own up that this time I got a little weak-kneed, an' wished powerful strong the't I war fa'rly out uv it."

"The bleeze warn't long in runnin' aroun' the pile uv dry timmer an' pine knots, an' the like, an' purty soon it begun ter scorch my old hide, an' swing my ha'r right lively."

"I heard, on't, down at Benton, a parson tellin' as how thar was a somethin' er other, I've forgot what he called it, that kinder overseed'd things down hyar on the arth."

"Well, it must 'a' been that same, fur the bleeze hadn't more'n got good a-goin', afore the all-fired wet norther kin swoopin' down, an' afore the Injuns know'd what war up, the fire war squenched out, an' the sticks scattered all over the perrairy. Lordy, how it did rain! an' cold! whew, it fairly shaved the top-knots offen the imps' greasy heads."

SMITTEN OR SMUT.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Bright eyes of the tenderest blue,
Such as angels, I fancy, might own,
And eyes of the merriest black,
And eyes of the prettiest brown,
Drawn by some magical power,
At church bent their gaze upon me,
In a manner most pleasingly strange,
And with smiles that were charming to see.

I smiled, too, and thought to myself
Of the one single fault that I had
Of looking so wretchedly sweet,
And setting the girls' hearts quite mad;
And I piled these girls from my soul,
As they sat there in sable and ermine,
Losing their dear little hearts,
Along with so much of the sermon.

I glanced at them sideways, and thought
It was nice to be gallant and gay,
And then I shook hands with myself—
A little exalted that day.
They smiled at me, too, in the gateway,
Though with them were good-looking beaux,
And when I got home I went straightway
To washing the smut off my nose.

Beat Time's Notes.

Some young men consider it more trying on the nervous system, to pop the question to the old gentleman than to the daughter. I never thought so. When I was a young man and meditated asking the old gen's consent, the thought of it didn't worry me a bit. I composed the following little speech, which I committed to memory, and recited constantly to my bed-post, with my hat on, in a style decidedly dramatic:

"Mr. Snoozlem, that I have long loved your daughter, Arabella, you certainly are aware, I hope I am worthy of her. Happiness is our aim and matrimony is our desire, and your consent is all that is lacking to crown our joy. Will you have me for your son-in-law?"

So bold was I that I several times started right off to see the old gentleman, but thought better of it and came back; and I often went boldly by his place of business, where he sold boots and shoes, without being obliged to stop.

Finally, I thought it was about time to get his consent; and one day, after walking by his shop several times for recreation, I went in and sat down on the old man's shoe-maker's wax. He had seen me so often that he thought it wasn't necessary to look up and recognize me, and after sitting quite awhile, watching him driving pegs, I began my little speech boldly and without hesitation:

"Mr. Arabella, that I have long—that I have long loved your daughter—your daughter Snoozlem—no Mr. Snoozlem, that I have long loved you, you are certainly aware—I mean, Arabella—it's quite warm in here, Mr. Snoozlem—I hope she is worthy of me—that is, I hope I am worthy of her. Happiness is—well, I forget what, and matrimony is—as well as could be expected. Your consent—consent is all that needs to be lacking—lacking to crown our joy. Will you have me—will you have me, Arabella—Mr. Snoozlem, I mean—for a father-in-law? Yours truly."

The old gen laid his work aside very deliberately, slid his goggles up on his head, raised himself up to the height of six feet, and as I went out of the door he didn't kick me, for the stool upon which I sat, and which still clung to me, presented a barrier.

That was the first time I popped the question to him; the next time, why, it was all right.

Add together two-thirds, three-fourths, one-fourth and so forth.

If one Dutchman can drink twenty-six glasses of beer when he is not thirsty, how many sheep, at twenty cents a yard, can go through a hole in the fence you paid no attention to, in an hour, if you have no objections, by the hay-scales, and you are not hungry, when sugar is sixteen ounces to the pound, and your shoes leak, provided your summer clothes come home from the wash-crowman's with every thing on them that ever was except the buttons, and you can pay the usual twenty-five cents on the dollar. Give the answer in-stanter.

A, B and C dine on nine loaves of bread. A eats one loaf; B eats two, and C the balance. Isn't C a hog of the deepest dye and the most beautiful proportion or any other man.

How poetically emblematic of patience is a thoughtful and pensive colored wood-sawyer, as he stands with one foot, covered with a shoe which looks like it might have been a carpet-slick, upon a matter-of-fact stick of wood, the same held firmly by the aid of a highly spiritual saw-buck, while his herculean hands tightly grasp the ethereal saw which he draws mechanically slow up and down through the above-mentioned stick of wood to the tune of a dollar and a quarter a cord—I say how emblematic of patience?

The portrait of myself, which I had painted to present to the society of Natural History, came home yesterday. The coat is a splendid likeness, the buttons are faultless, the cravat true to life, but the face—well, that's what's the matter with it. It looks just like my grandfather; indeed, if I had ever had a grandfather, I should say it was he. I am very much out about it—I am out about two hundred dollars. It is rather too original.

Bad trees for society—the will-ow. A languishing tree—the pine. A hand-y tree—the palm. A seedy-tree—the cedar. The worst tree—devil-try. If they are not so, what are they?

An Indian female is a squaw, and an Indian female baby is a squall.

The difference between a slow traveler and a female teacher is, that one misses the trains, and the other trains the misses. The fellow who originated the above didn't injure himself, for he got it out of his head through a crack.

Mary had a little lamp,
It's light was white as snow,
And every time that Mary went anywhere after dark,
That lamp was sure to go.

She filled it by the stove one night,
Which generally is the rule,
When it busted and went all over and burned her all up.
Because she was a foot-fuel.

A MAN is pretty far gone whose ears, with holes punched in them, will both hang on one nail.

WHEN a man's trade fails to pay he finds that it pays to fail. BEAT TIME.